

**GURU ARJAN DEV [1581-1606]**  
**A STUDY OF SIKH INSTITUTIONS, PRACTICES**  
**AND OUTLOOK**

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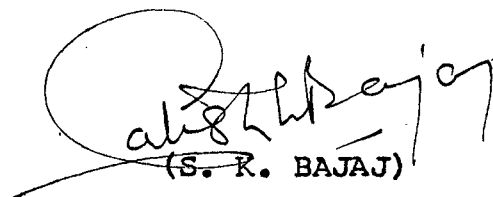


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(S. K. BAJAJ)

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PREFACE

The role of Guru Arjan Dev in the evolution of Sikh institutions and practices, though very significant, has somehow remained a neglected field of study among the historians. By the time Guru Arjan Dev ascended to the guruship in 1581 A.D., the Sikh movement had reached such a stage where it required a distinct organization, autonomous set of institutions and practices to regulate the socio-religious behaviour of the adherents with a view to safeguarding doctrinal purity and ideological reconfirmation of Sikh outlook. With this historical perspective, an humble attempt has been made to analyse the personality, perspective and perceptions of Guru Arjan Dev. Realizing the need for the creation of stable institutional matrix - guru, granth and gurdwara, and subsidiary institutions like the sangat, pangat, and masand, Guru Arjan Dev evolved socio-religious practices around the nucleus of the Adi Granth, the spiritual Guru of the Sikhs or its abode, the gurdwara. How it patterned the daily life of the adherents in terms of standardization of practices and rituals and how it imparted uniqueness as well as distinct identity to the cultural pattern known as the Sikh religion, forms the whole framework as well as the thrust of the present study. Aware of the magnitude of the task, complexity of the problem and multidimensional aspect of the study such as theology, philosophy, institutions,



practices and rituals, I claim to have made only an humble attempt to understand and explain the nature of historical reality from my own point of view.

In pursuance of my study, I visited a number of libraries such as Central Library, Patiala, Reference Library, Panjab Language Department, Patiala, Dr. Ganda Singh's personal library, Patiala, Punjabi University Library, Patiala, Panjab State Archives Library, Patiala, Guru Nanak Foundation, Library, New Delhi and Sikh Reference Library, Amritsar and many others. I wish to express my thanks to the keepers of record and the staff of these libraries. I owe my special thanks to Dr. Bhagat Singh, who had made<sup>to</sup> me available a few Persian works from Dr. Ganda Singh's personal collections which were checked and verified with the help of my esteemed friend Dr. Balkar Singh, Head, Department of Sri Guru Granth Sahib Studies, Punjabi University, Patiala to whom I owe my gratitude for his valuable help.

I acknowledge with deep sense of gratitude the guidance provided to me by my esteemed supervisor, Dr. Satish K. Bajaj with whose co-operation, the project has been completed. From the very beginning upto the execution of the project, he took keen interest in the various stages of my research work. His deep insight and command over the research methodology have immensely<sup>e</sup> helped me in completing my thesis.

I must thank Dr. A.C. Arora, Professor & Head, Department of History who had suggested this topic for my research. He also took abiding interest in my work and was always a source of encouragement whenever I seemed to falter. He also gave me valuable suggestions which I incorporated in my thesis.

I shall be failing in my duty if I do not express my sincere gratitude to my esteemed friend and senior colleague Dr. M.P. Kohli who has not only been a great source of encouragement but also has rendered timely help, particularly in going through the manuscript meticulously and in the process of making a large number of suggestions.

I also express my heartfelt thanks to my friend Dr. Kehar Singh, Reader in Political Science, who has helped me in solving some basic issues.

I am really thankful to my wife, Parkash Kaur who has been a great source of inspiration for me during the whole period of my research. My sons Parminder, Shivinder and Ravinder, and daughter Sofia also deserve my thanks, for they patiently bore my neglect of duties towards them during the period of this research project.

Mr. Surjeet Singh deserves all my appreciation and thanks for typing this thesis without serious mistakes.

*Joginder Singh Rekhi*

CHAPTER I

HISTORICAL SOURCES: A BRIEF REVIEW

In the long history of the Sikh movement, there are various stages of its development which are clearly demarcated and which merit our attention. The study of the role of Guru Arjan Dev in the evolution of Sikh institutions and practices in a historical and sociological perspective, though significant, has not received much attention of historians and scholars. The present study is an humble attempt aiming at filling this important gap in the Panjab history.

The aim of the present study is to evaluate the role of Guru Arjan Dev in providing new orientation to the Sikh movement by establishing stable institutional framework, and innovating new practices, and imparting new outlook to the Sikhs. Thus the present work is an attempt at a systematic study of the Sikh institutions, practices and outlook as emerged during the pontification of Guru Arjan Dev.

The present study has, of course, posed some pertinent problems, the foremost among them is the non-availability of adequate primary sources. However, there are primarily two kinds of source material for constructing the history of Guru Arjan Dev. For the reconstruction of medieval Indian history, the Persian sources are extremely

important but for the problem under study these sources are woefully inadequate. Making casual references to the Sikhs and the Sikh movement they help us in reconstructing our conclusions on important aspects relating to present study such as the martyrdom of Guru Arjan Dev and the institution of masand. The sources in Gurmukhi script mostly written by the Sikh scholars though, religious in idiom, reflect the feelings, sentiments, responses and reactions of the people who wrote what they desired to write, and show what they wished to be known to others. Though mixed with the myths and expressed in the folk rather popular language they are significant, for they are not merely authentic and popular but also have not been properly analysed and used. Herein an humble attempt has been made to use them by separating facts from fiction for the purposes of delineating institutions and practices. Besides, a few contemporary sources are available to us in Gurmukhi such as Adi Granth, the most significant one, and the Varan of Bhai Gurdas which throw ample light on the various aspects of the present project. Nevertheless, all combined they fall short of our expectations and prove inadequate in making a study of the Sikh institutions, practices and outlook. Therefore, the Sikh chronicles

are the sources which help us in filling<sup>up</sup> the important gaps. The main sources which have been used are mentioned below.

#### Adi Granth:

The principal and the most authentic source of the present study is the Adi Granth, popularly called 'Sri Guru Granth Sahib' to denote that it is the spiritual Guru to the Sikhs, for it was given a Divine status by the compiler of the Granth himself.<sup>1</sup> It was compiled by the fifth guru Arjan Dev in 1604 A.D., and includes the bani and teachings of first five gurus and the number of saints and bhaktas whose teachings were identical with those of the gurus. Later on, the bani of Guru Tegh Bahadur was added to it by Guru Gobind Singh. There is also one slok which some scholars attribute to the tenth guru Gobind Singh. The Adi Granth, is a comprehensive scripture of 1430 pages written in Gurmukhi script in verse. It is, therefore, relatively difficult to understand and interpret the mystical experience, thought and philosophy contained in poetry, for the gurus

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1. Pothi (Granth) is the abode of Lord. Adi Granth, Sarang, M.5, p. 1226.

used symbols and similies from the religious tradition and culture in which they were living, for the communication of their mystical experience or message, ethical values and philosophy relating to the Supernatural Power (God), and its relation to the Universe etc. Therefore, proficiency in Punjabi language and adequate knowledge of religious traditions and Panjabi culture is absolutely essential for a researcher to understand and analyse the philosophy and thought as contained in the Adi Granth. But a person like Ernest Trumpp, without such an aptitude, has made cynical and irrelevant observations about the Adi Granth. Having vague understanding of the given culture and traditions, he says that the "Sikh Granth is a very long volume, but incoherent and shallow in the extreme, and couched at the same time in dark and perplexing language, in order to cover the defects."<sup>2</sup> But this remark is a mis-statement of facts as is evident from the remarks of a Western scholar who later on called it 'Odium theologicum', which gave mortal offence to the Sikhs.<sup>3</sup>

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2. Ernest Trumpp, The Adi-Granth or the Holy Scripture of the Sikhs (London: Allen and Co., 1877), p. VII.

3. M.A., Macauliffe, The Sikh Religion, 2nd Indian edn. (1919 rpt. New Delhi: S. Chand & Company Ltd., 1963), p. vii.

Though neither narrative nor historical, the Adi Granth throws some light on the popular Sikh institutions like the guru, sangat, pangat and gurdwara. Moreover, the Sikh Gurus were men of vision and the Adi Granth abounds with references to their ethico-spiritual insights which help us in drawing our conclusions with regard to the study of Sikh outlook in relation to the Sikh way of life.

For the non-Punjabi scholars, its translations in English are now available. First attempt in this regard was made by Ernest Trumpp who translated a portion of the Adi Granth from Gurmukhi into English and published it in early 1877 under the title 'The Adi-Granth or the Holy Scripture of the Sikhs', London, 1877. But it may be pointed out that his translation is highly "literal and at various places incorrect"<sup>4</sup> and thus is not very useful for the scholars. The excessively inaccurate and biased translation of the Adi Granth by Ernest Trumpp caused great resentment among the Sikhs and it inspired M.A. Macauliffe, a Western scholar to produce a valuable work on the Sikh religion in six volumes including its translation in parts, in 1909 (Oxford University at Clarendon Press, London). His work, till this day has remained the most popular and widely quoted on Sikhism, particularly among the Western scholars. His third volume on Sikh religion is useful for the present study

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4. Surinder Singh Kohli, A Critical Study of Adi-Granth (New Delhi: The Punjabi Writers Co-operative Industrial Society Ltd., 1961), p.23.

particularly with reference to the Sikh practices and Sikh outlook. The whole of the Adi Granth has of late been translated into English by scholars like Gopal Singh in four volumes in 1960-64 (New Delhi: Gurdas Kapur and Sons Pvt. Ltd.,) and by Manmohan Singh in eight volumes with text in Panjabi and English in 1962-65 (Amritsar: Shiromani Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee). Recently Punjabi University, Patiala has published its first two volumes in English translated by Gurbachan Singh Talib. Thus it has now come within the reach of non-Panjabi scholars to make use of this significant and most authentic source for the study of various aspects relating to the early Sikh history.

#### Works of Bhai Gurdas:

Bhai Gurdas<sup>5</sup> who was contemporary of third, fourth, fifth and sixth gurus and consequently his personal compositions such as thirty-nine vars or ballads and 556 kabits or couplets and swayyas are considered as primary sources with regard to the guru's history in general and that of the fifth and sixth gurus in particular. His vars are essentially an attempt to render in simple language the central theme of

5. He was the son of Tej Bhan brother of Guru Amar Das and was born in 1551 A.D. He was thus the first cousin of Bibi Bhani daughter of Guru Amar Das, wife of Guru Ram Das, and mother of Guru Arjan Dev. He was a talented and prolific writer and remain attached to the Sikh Gurus in one capacity or the other. Under Guru Amar Das, he worked as Sangatia of distant Sangat at Agra and was recalled by Guru Ram Das to Amritsar when he took in hand the construction work of Amritsar new township. He worked as scribe to the fifth Guru, Arjan Dev who dictated him the Adi Granth. Bhai Gurdas died at Goindwal in 1629 and his funeral rites were performed by Guru Hargobind himself.



the moral virtues as cherished by the gurus in Sikhism. Commenting on the historical and theological importance of his vars, Khushwant Singh remarks, "They are the only really authentic references to the period of 3rd, 4th, 5th, 6th gurus by a Sikh. His commentary on Sikh practices are valuable indications of the state of things at the time and are, therefore, regarded as "Key" to understanding of the Sikh scriptures."<sup>6</sup>

The works of Bhai Gurdas have not so far been studied from the point of view of constructing history of the period. Though there is no chronology of events and the account is often sketchy yet at places it abounds in historical references which are very useful for the study of the Sikh institutions, Sikh practices and Sikh outlook. It may be pointed out that it is the only source which has brought to light the names of the thirteen chief masands of Guru Arjan Dev which has helped in providing a new interpretation to the organization of the masand institution. Besides, there are specific references to the Sikh sangats flourishing during the time of Guru Arjan Dev at Lahore, Sirhind, Agra, Thanesar, Kabul and Kashmir etc. which help us in presenting our conclusions regarding the development of the institution of sangat. Thus vars of Bhai Gurdas are of immense value in the study of the present research.

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6. Khushwant Singh, A History of the Sikhs (London: Oxford University Press, 1963), Vol. 1, p.310.

Besides these above mentioned principal, primary sources, the Sikh chronicles of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries also emerge as the main sources especially with regard to the Sikh practices and rituals as <sup>they</sup> evolved and emerged during the time of Guru Arjan Dev. These Sikh chronicles were written much after the event they narrate, and for their recording they depended upon oral tradition rather than the eyewitness accounts. Though impeachable, in the opinion of traditional historians, they are quite useful and important sources of information especially with regard to the present study. There being a powerful tradition of continuity, it may be accepted that these chronicles, though not contemporary, are historically valuable for they carry on a tradition without displaying any contradiction and deviation. They have been mainly used for providing supplementary information. The principal among them are reviewed as under:

Gur Bilas Patshahi Chhevin:

It was written in verse in Gurmukhi script by Sohan Kavi in 1718 A.D. It contains detailed information about the life and important events relating to Guru Arjan Dev and Guru Hargobind. It gives a vivid description of the compilation of the Adi Granth and its installation in Harimandir Sahib in 1604 amid practices and ceremonies observed on this occasion and also highlights the ceremonies which were to be observed as a part of daily religious routine

concerning the Granth and the Granth-Darbar. Though not contemporary, it is a very important source with regard to the Sikh practices and rituals and the emergence of gurdwara institution. In view of its importance as a source of history, it has been edited and published by Inder Singh Giani (Amritsar; 1968), and translated in Hindi by Manmohan Sehgal, published by Bhasha Vibhag, Patiala in 1972. Another version of this tradition in Gurmukhi script 'Gur Bilas Chhevin Patshahi' was also published in original without any editing by the Language Department, Punjab, Patiala in 1970. Its authorship is yet uncertain.

#### Mahima Parkash:

There are two versions of Mahima Parkash, one is written in prose and the other in verse. The prose version was written by Bawa Kirpal Singh in 1741 A.D. It has a brief account of the life of Guru Nanak and other Sikh Gurus. But the Mahima Parkash written in Kavita (verse) by Sarup Das Bhalla in 1776 is more elaborate in description. Its author was from the line of Guru Amar Das. We get a few references relevant to our study from these works. An extract pertaining to the life of Guru Nanak from Mahima Parkash Vartak (prose) was translated in English and published in Panjab Past and Present under the title 'The Light of Glory' in Vol. III, 1969 for the convenience of non-Panjabi researchers. Similarly, Mahima Parkash in poetry has also been published by Bhasha Vibhag, Punjab, Patiala, edited by Gobind Singh Lamba and Khazan Singh, in 1971.

Bansavalinama Dasan Patshahian Ka:

It was completed in 1779 by Kesar Singh Chhiber<sup>7</sup> and is considered an authentic source because his father and grandfather were closely associated with Guru Gobind Singh from whom he had inherited the oral information about the events pertaining to the previous Gurus. His work is quite useful particularly with regard to the execution of Guru Arjan Dev, for he has not mentioned any event of Guru Arjan's meeting with the rebel prince Khusro or any help rendered to him by the Guru in any manner directly or indirectly. It has been edited by Rattan Singh Jaggi and published by the Panjab University, Chandigarh in "Parkh", (Research bulletin of Panjabi language and literature) in Vol. II of 1972.

Sri Gurpartap Suraj Granth:

It is the most elaborate work on the life, teachings and socio-religious practices and rituals as evolved in Sikhism from Guru Angad to Banda Bahadur. It was written by Bhai Santokh Singh in 1840 in Brajbhasha in verse. It is not a contemporary source. Written and completed after a gap of more than two centuries of the execution of Guru Arjan Dev, it is also based on the oral tradition. Giving due margin to the changes which generally creep into such sources, one can not discard them as useless if the information furnished by

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7. He was born in 1710 and was the grandson of Bhai Dharam Dass Chhiber, a close associate of Guru Gobind Singh and the son of Bhai Gurbax Singh, a daroga of Sri Darbar Sahib Ramdaspur (Amritsar).

them corresponds, complements and corroborates the information furnished by other contemporary or near contemporary sources. In this regard, it is quite useful for the present study. It provides a lot of information about the Sikh institutions and practices. Though in matter of significance such sources cannot be compared with the contemporary sources yet in the case of paucity of contemporary sources they can be gainfully used. This granth was published in 1930 edited by Bhai Vir Singh, Khalsa Samachar, Amritsar.

#### Janam Sakhis:

They are essentially stories concerning (with) the birth and scattered biographical sketches of Guru Nanak with admixture of miraculous events. Therefore Janam Sakhis are not termed by some scholars as biographies but hagiographies which means literature on lives and legends of saints.<sup>8</sup>

Among about a dozen of Janam Sakhis which are now current, there are three principal Janam Sakhis - Bhai Bala Wali Janam Sakhi, which is believed to be written by some time after 1650 A.D., Puratan Janam Sakhi which is also called Walayat Wali Janam Sakhi, was written in 1635 A.D.<sup>9</sup> and Meharban Wali Janam Sakhi which is considered to be written by Manohar Dass Meharban some time in the first half of the seventeenth century. The latter Janam Sakhi has been edited in Panjabi language in 1962 under the auspices of the Sikh

8. H.R. Gupta, History of the Sikh Gurus, (New Delhi: U.C. Kapoor & Sons, 1973), p.21.

9. W.H. McLeod, Guru Nanak and the Sikh Religion, (London: Oxford University Press, 1968), (Indian Print), 1976, p.17.

History Research Department, Amritsar and Puratan Janam Sakhi was edited by Bhai Vir Singh in 1926 (published by Khalsa Samachar, Amritsar). Of these Janam Sakhis, "Puratan version which was more primitive one", remarks McLeod, "nearer to the time when memory still played a significant part, and was consequently more reliable."<sup>10</sup>

The utility of such literature for writing authentic history has been a controversial problem. Without delving into that problem it is enough to state that this tradition has been used to a limited extent in the present study as it contains a few references with regard to the genesis of Sikh institutions such as the guru and the manjis.

Prachin Panth Parkash.

It was written by Rattan Singh Bhangu and published in 1841 in poetry. It was later published in 1914 by Khalsa Samachar, Amritsar. It is a scattered account from Guru Nanak to the eighteenth century politics. His account with regard to the Sikh gurus is very sketchy. The author has devoted only one page on the history from Guru Angad to Guru Teg Bahadur. But it has a useful reference with regard to the ultimate execution of Guru Arjan Dev when he writes: "Was not Guru Arjan thrown into the river?"<sup>11</sup> With the help of other sources, this evidence provides adequate basis for

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10. Ibid., p.30.

11. Rattan Singh Bhangu, Prachin Panth Parkash, 3rd edn. (rpt. Amritsar: Wazir Hind Press, 1952), p. 433.

the understanding of the manner in which Guru Arjan was finally executed.

Panth Parkash and Twarikh Guru Khalsa:

The author of these two works was Bhai Gian Singh ji Giani who was a descendant of Bhai Mani Singh. Panth Parkash is based upon Prachin Panth Parkash and is written in kavita which is definitely an improvement upon it. It was completed in 1867 A.D. and was published for the first time in 1880 A.D. from Delhi as is evident from the internal evidence of this granth.<sup>12</sup> It was later published by Bhasha Vibhag, Patiala in 1970. But he emerged as a popular Sikh chronicler or historian because of his popular work Twarikh Guru Khalsa written in prose in three volumes. Its first volume which covers the career and works of the ten Gurus was published in 1892 by Guru Gobind Singh Press Sialkot. According to Bhai Gian Singh, it took him five years in enlarging this volume in the light of Nanak Parkash and Suraj Parkash Granth in poetry and was able to complete in 1958 BK. (1900 A.D.),<sup>13</sup> and which was later published by Bhasha Vibhag, 1970. It is a quite useful work for filling<sup>up</sup> some gaps of the present study.

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12. Bhai Gian Singh ji Giani, Panth Parkash (Patiala: Bhasha Vibhag, 1970), p. 8.

13. Ibid., Twarikh Guru Khalsa, enlarged 2nd edn. (1892 rpt. Patiala: Bhasha Vibhag, 1970), p. 1124.

Sri Gur Pur Parkash Granth (Vol. II):

Written in poetry by Sant Rain Prem Singh<sup>and</sup> published in 1919 by Gyani Press, Amritsar, it is also a useful in comparative context especially on socio-religious practices and rituals as evolved during the time of Guru Arjan Dev. He is the first chronicler who has mentioned in detail, the Anand form of marriage of Hargobind, son of Guru Arjan whereas the authors of Gur Bilas Chhevin Patshahi, and Gurpartap Suraj Granth have mentioned nothing but the 'lavan' circumambulated by Hargobind. Though this work is of the latter period yet this helps in connecting the original tradition of Sikhism which might have been lost in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries because of Hindu influence. The old tradition was revived under the impact of popular Sikh movements such as the Singh Sabha and this work denotes regeneration of Sikhism.

Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri:

Although some contemporary or a near contemporary Persian sources throw light on the institutions and practices only to a limited extent, a brief review of these sources in terms of their utility for the project may not be out of place here. Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri is an autobiography of the Mughal Emperor Jahangir who was<sup>a</sup> contemporary of Guru Arjan Dev. In his autobiography, Jahangir had also recorded his casual impressions of Guru Arjan Dev and the development of Sikhism, apart from making charges against the Guru which led to his



death punishment with tortures. Being primarily interested in imperial matters Jahangir has given a detailed account of the events pertaining to Khusro's revolt, his capture along-with his associates. All these events are quite useful in analysing and interpreting the motives behind the execution of Guru Arjan Dev. It has been made accessible to the non-Persian scholars as it was translated by Alexander Rogers, edited by Henry Beveridge in 1909 in two volumes, and reprinted in Delhi by Munshi Ram Manohar Lal in 1968.

Dabistan-i-Mazahib:

For a long time, Mohsin Fani was considered as the author of Dabistan-i-Mazahib but recent researchers have proved that its author was Mubid Zulifikar Ardistani. It is held by some scholars that he was probably born in 1615 and completed this work in 1645 A.D.<sup>14</sup> As its title indicates, the author has given a faithful description of the five major religions of the seventeenth century. Since he was the near contemporary of Guru Arjan, therefore, his account about the Sikhs and Sikhism in general and with regard to the period of Guru Arjan in particular is quite useful in interpreting the development of Sikhism and the execution of Guru Arjan Dev. It has been translated in English by Shea, David and Antony Troyer, published by Allen & Company, London,

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14. Bhagat Singh, Sikh Polity, (New Delhi: Oriental Publishers and Distributors, 1978), p. 338.

1843. Ganda Singh has also translated an extract from the Dabistan-i-Mazahib which is relevant to the Sikhs and Sikhism under the title "Guru Nanak and Nanak Panthis" and was published in Panjab Past and Present, Vol. III, Panjab Historical Studies, Punjabi University, Patiala, 1969 for the convenience of non-Persian scholars working on various aspects of early Sikh history.

Thus with the help of these sources and many more, as well as insights of well known historians and scholars upon whose writings the author has drawn rather liberally, an humble attempt has been made to present a complete picture approximating reality as far as possible with regard to the institutions, practices and outlook. In the following pages an effort has been made to establish that the period of Guru Arjan's pontification was a landmark in the development and consolidation of Sikhism because, at this time, Sikhism was confronted with serious internal as well as external crises which prompted Guru Arjan Dev to evolve institutional framework with a set of socio-religious practices and rituals, ultimately transforming a sect into religion.

## CHAPTER II

### GURU ARJAN DEV: PERSPECTIVE, PERSONALITY AND PERCEPTIONS

Religion is one of the most significant aspects of man's life as it finds its expression in all the human activities. Nevertheless, it is not constrained by physical environments. It, as a social institution, develops patterns of beliefs, values and behaviour which are shared by the members of a community. Since it evolves within historical time, it directs our attention to the changes it witnesses in terms of institutions and practices which are its symbolic representations. While studying Guru Arjan Dev's contribution to the evolution of Sikhism, it must be kept in mind that the period since its inception is comparatively very short and consequently one can hardly expect to see the development of elaborate system of organization in terms of institutions and practices. Though rudimentary form of institutional framework had been set up to keep the theocratic body together to regulate the religious and social life of its members yet it still had not acquired marked independent identity as an aggregate of separate group with its own institutional framework and network of its practices. The Sikhs still formed a loosely organized group as every necessary activity had not been embraced by the movement for the consummation of plan of salvation. Sociologically, therefore, it had not formed an autonomous body with an organized structure to direct and regulate the conduct of its members.

While evaluating Guru Arjan's role in the evolution of Sikhism as an organized religion, it is necessary to preface the study with a brief analysis of developmental perspective of Sikhism and Guru Arjan's personality and perceptions. As these three aspects are circularly integrated, their study is essential to grasp the import of Guru Arjan's contribution in the establishment of institutions, practices and outlook. The pontification of Guru Arjan Dev marks the end of the so called original chrismatic period which created a necessity of standardizing the message and raising the structure of ecclesiastical institutions for the routinization of a sect that developed into a religious order.<sup>1</sup>

#### Perspective:

The emergence of Guru Nanak on the stage of Indian history is associated with the stagnation of society and the disintegration of the Sultanate of Delhi. He made serious indictment of the administration of the Lodhis in the following words:

- i) The Kali-yuga is tuned knife, rulers are butchers; Righteousness on wings is flown. This is the dark night of evil; The moon of truth is nowhere visible, nor risen.<sup>2</sup>
- ii) These dogs (Lodhi rulers) have thrown away the precious gem (the country of Hindustan) in a ravaged condition. When they are dead and gone, none shall remember them.<sup>3</sup>

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1. Ernst Troeltch, The Social Teachings of the Christian Churches, Olive Wyon, trans. (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1931), Vol. II, pp. 999-1000.
  2. Adi Granth, Majh, M.1, p. 145.
  3. Ibid., Asa, M.1, p. 362.

Guru Nanak seems to have had direct access to <sup>the</sup> series of events of Lodhi-Mughal conflict leading to the extinction of the short-lived dynasty of the Lodhis.<sup>4</sup> It is also evident from the compositions of Guru Nanak, that the author witnessed (at least, was in close proximity to the place) the sack of Saidpur (presently Eminabad in Pakistan) mostly inhabited by the Sayyids in 1521 A.D. The immediate affect of this indiscriminate massacre, plunder and bloodshed was that it severely pained the tender heart of Guru Nanak, who in great anguish writes:

God took Khurasan under His wings, and exposed  
India to the terrorism of Babur.  
The Creator takes no blames on Himself, It was  
death disguised as Mughal that made war on us.  
When there was such slaughter; such groaning,  
didst Thou not feelth pain?  
Creator Thou belongest to all. If a powerful  
party beat another powerful party, it is not  
matter for anger;  
But if a ravenous lion falls upon a herd of cows,  
then the master of the herd should show his  
manliness.<sup>5</sup>

It may be noted that for the indiscriminate massacre of the Indians, Guru Nanak does not blame the muslims but refers to Babur as <sup>the</sup> Mughal. Similarly, Guru Nanak's criticism of the contemporary politico-administrative system is made primarily on moral and ethical basis. Unlike the other contemporary leaders of the socio-religious movements, he was

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4. Niharanjan Ray, The Sikh Gurus and the Sikh Society (Patiala: Punjabi University, 1970) p. 36.

5. Adi Granth, Asa, M.1, p.360.

alive to the political developments in the country and did not prohibit his followers from taking a serious view of the situation with an aim of effecting transformation. Nevertheless, his major concern was social, for without liberating the masses from the yoke of brahmanical hold it was not possible to reform the society.

In this context, we may begin our analysis of the existing society with the observation of Bhai Gurdas, a Saint Paul of the Sikhs and near contemporary of Guru Nanak, who has given a graphic picture of the caste rigidity and the mutual jealousies of the people of the province. He writes, "The Hindus and the Muslims are divided into four vernas; and into four sects; in self conceit, contempt of each other and arrogance, they enter into meaningless wranglings."<sup>6</sup> Divided into a number of castes and sub-castes,<sup>7</sup> the Hindu society developed around itself carrion-like structure, a tangled web or gordian knot of caste restrictions and distinctions, ceremonialism, ritualism and artificial purity and impurity (pollution), so as to serve the interest of the brahman caste and to consolidate the caste structure of the society.<sup>8</sup> As regards religious practices and rituals,

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6. Varan Bhai Gurdas, ed. Bhai Vir Singh (Amritsar: Khalsa Samachar, Hall Bazar, 1972) Var 1, Pauri 21, p.18.
  7. A.B. Pandey, Society and Government in Medieval India (Allahabad: Central Book Depot, 1965) pp. 203-204; Bhagat Singh, Sikh Polity (New Delhi: Oriental Publishers & Distributors, 1978) p. 19.
  8. Jagjit Singh, The Sikh Revolution (New Delhi: Bahri Publications Pvt. Ltd., 1981) pp. 45-46.

Gokul Chand Narang observes, "The springs of true religion had been choked up by weeds of unmeaning ceremonials, debasing superstitions, the selfishness of the priests and indifference of the people. Form had supplanted the reality and high spiritual character of the Hinduism had been buried under the ostentatious paraphernalia of sects. The centuries of invasions, foreign misrule, and persecution had produced the greatest depression and the spiritual subjection and stagnation had aggravated the demoralization to an enormous degree."<sup>9</sup> In almost similar vein A.C. Bannerjee says that the brahamans could not stimulate their Hindu society either intellectually or spiritually. They succeeded in converting religion into lifeless string of formalities, and in promoting social arthritis.<sup>10</sup> Recording the condition of the Hindu society, Guru Nanak says that the Hindus visited the places of pilgrimage sixty eight in number in Guru Nanak's calculation.<sup>11</sup> They believed in such superstitions that having a dip in the holy water could fetch them salvation and they also "indulged in idol worship and burnt incenses before them."<sup>12</sup> It is also revealed from

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9. Gokul Chand Narang, Transformation of Sikhism, 5th edn. (1912, rpt. Delhi: New Book Society of India, 1960), p.20.
  10. A.C. Bannerjee, Guru Nanak and His Times (Patiala: Punjabi University, 1971), p. 75.
  11. Adi Granth, Asa, M.1, p. 465.
  12. ਤੀਰਥ ਨਾਵਰਿ ਅਰਚਾ ਪੂਜਾ ਅਗਰ ਵਾਸੁ ਬਹਕਾਰੁ ॥  
Ibid, p. 465.

the bani of the Guru that the Hindus worshipped many gods goddesses and had forgotten the unity of god-head.<sup>13</sup>

Similarly, the Muslim society in the Panjab, as in other parts of India, was marked by sectarian divisions as Sunni, Shia, Ismaili, Mulhid, Batini, etc. The Sunnis formed the largest proportion of Muslim population in the Panjab.<sup>14</sup> The assumption that the Islamic society was based on the idea of equality is refuted by socio-economic facts. A Muslim noble could not be equated with Muslim water carrier. A broad social stratification in the Muslim society could be easily seen. The nobles formed the social elite and they enjoyed greater economic advantages than any other section or group and according to J.S. Grewal, "The craftsmen, personal servants and domestic slaves both male and female formed the lowest strata while the middling strata was formed by the peasants, soldiers, traders, scholars, writers, the Sayyids, the Shaikhzadas and the administrative personnels. The word 'qaum' in its application to the social group among the Muslim, was almost the equivalent of 'caste'.<sup>15</sup> Moreover, Islam was also confined to mechanical performance of five daily prayers (namaz), observance of fast (rozah) in the

13. ਗਾਵਨਿ ਗੋਪੀਆਂ ਗਾਵਨਿ ਰਾਮੁ ॥ 5 ॥ ਗਾਵਨਿ ਸੀਤਾ ਰਾਜੇ ਰਾਮੁ ॥

Ibid., Asa, M.1, p. 465.

14. J.S. Grewal, Guru Nanak in History (Chandigarh: Panjab University, 1969), p. 36.

15. Ibid., p. 36; also see: Caste and Social Stratification among the Muslims, ed. Imtiaz Ahmed (Delhi: Manohar Book House, 1975), p. 166.



month of Ramzan, id celebration,<sup>16</sup> and pilgrimage or hajj to their holy place, the Mecca.<sup>17</sup> They also started worshipping their mausoleums<sup>18</sup> for the fulfilment of their desires. Thus "there was a complete breakdown of moral standards"; observes G.S. Chhabra, "and religion instead of being a force against it, had become a simple hoax. True religion had been forgotten, yet the Hindus and the Muslims fought claiming the superiority of one religion upon the other. Such was the degradation."<sup>19</sup>

It was in response to this milieu that Nanak launched his reform movement. He preached liberal social doctrines; he was the apostle of universal brotherhood of man and condemned castes and clans,<sup>20</sup> for he had firm belief that God is one and the creator of all.<sup>21</sup> His gospel of fatherhood of God<sup>22</sup> and the brotherhood of man<sup>23</sup> makes it

16. Varan Bhai Gurdas, op.cit., Var 1, pauri 20, p. 17.

17. J.S. Grewal, op.cit., p.67.

18. Varan Bhai Gurdas, op.cit., Var 1, pauri 18, p.16.

19. G.S. Chhabra, The Advanced Study in the History of Panjab, (Ludhiana: Sharanjit Kaur, 1961), p. 25. | ?

20. Sardul Singh Caveeshar, The Sikh Studies (Lahore: National Publications, 1937), p. 9.

21. He is the Sole Supreme Being; of eternal manifestation; Creator, Immanent Reality;...  
Adi Granth, Japuji, M.1, p.1.

22. ਮਤਨਾ ਜੀਆ ਕਾ ਇਹੁ ਦਾਤਾ . . .

Ibid., Japuji, M.1, p.2.

23. ਸਤਿ ਮਹਿ ਜੋਤਿ ਜੋਤਿ ਹੇ ਸੋਇ॥ ਤਿਸ ਏ ਚਲਣਿ ਸਭ ਮਹਿ ਚਲਣੁ ਹੋਇ॥

Ibid., Dhanasri, M.1, p. 663.

explicitly clear that all the human beings irrespective of birth, religion, caste, sex or riches, are essentially the children of the same father and <sup>the</sup> members of the one big family, and thus he recognised the principle of equality of man and the woman. This universal and non-sectarian gospel of Guru Nanak in itself became the first step in differentiating the Sikh mission from the older creeds, and struck at the foundation on which the superstructure of the then existing religious sectarianism had been raised;<sup>24</sup> believes Jagjit Singh. He further adds: it was imperative for the Sikh Guru to build social system and organise people outside the caste-dominated highly rigid and hierarchical Hindu society. In this direction, Guru Nanak, the founder of the Sikh movement, laid the foundation of the popular Sikh institutions - dharamsala (religious centre), sangat (congregation of his followers), langar (community kitchen) and manji (Seat of preaching)<sup>25</sup> during his travels in India and outside for spreading his message. **These institutions** became very important vehicles for the spread of his gospel of universalism.

By reciting Japuji, his own composition in praise of God, one may assert that Guru Nanak believed <sup>that</sup> the nature of his bani was sacred and divine.<sup>26</sup> The subsequent Gurus felt

24. Jagjit Singh, op.cit., pp. 101 & 105.

25. Ibid., p. 109.

26. According to Bhai Gurdas, Japuji was recited in the early morning, Arati and Sodar were recited in the evening at the Kartarpur dharamsala during his life time (Var 1, pauri 38, p. 34).

the need of collecting and compiling it to provide an authentic volume (Granth) for meditation and worship for the followers. He was also aware of the importance of the use of popular language i.e. Punjabi for imparting his religious instructions and composed his bani (hymns) in a script which is popularly known as Gurmukhi. His successor, Guru Angad popularised Gurmukhi letters to be used as the script for the hymns of the Gurus. He collected and preserved the spiritual writings of Guru Nanak.<sup>27</sup> The institution of langar was continued and expanded at Khadur Sahib, under the direct supervision of his wife Mata Khivi and a sweet dish (khir) was always served in Guru's langar.<sup>28</sup>

But it was Guru Amar Das, the third Guru of the Sikhs, who took keen interest in strengthening and consolidating the existing institution of manjis<sup>29</sup> by reorganizing it<sup>30</sup> and created twenty two centres (manjis), each one placed under the charge of a trusted and pious devoted Sikh to preach the Sikh mission and to keep the local body in touch with the Guru (Centre). Each of these manjis was further sub-divided into smaller sections called pirhis<sup>31</sup> (sub-centres)

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27. Bhagat Singh, op.cit., p.6.

28. Adi Granth, Var Satta & Balwand, p. 967.

29. It was a seat of preaching established by Guru Nanak Dev during his missionary tours.

30. Teja Singh, "Are There Sects in Sikhism", Panjab Past and Present, Vol. XII-I, April 1978, p. 137.

31. Teja Singh, Sikhism, Its Ideals and Institutions, 5th edn. (1938 rpt. Amritsar: Khalsa Brothers, Mai Sewan, 1970), p. 74; Indubhushan Banerjee, Evolution of Khalsa, 3rd edn. (1936 rpt. Calcutta: A Mukherjee and Company, 1972), pp. 168 & 257.

Thus Guru Amar Das raised an elaborate organization which went a long way in strengthening the foundation of the Sikh movement and carrying on its work in different and remote parts of the country.<sup>32</sup> The institution of langar was not only elaborated under him, but a new dimension was added to it. Now, no body could meet him unless he had dined in a pangat at the Guru's langar.<sup>33</sup> Besides, his langar was supplied daily with sweet dish of pudding 'krah prasad'.<sup>34</sup> which has become the consecrated dish of the Sikhs.

Guru Amar Das also got constructed a baoli (ablong well) in 1559 at Goindwal with eighty four steps for the use of visitors and it developed into a big religious centre.<sup>35</sup> McLeod suggests:

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32. Gokul Chand Narang, op.cit., p.33.

33. Sarup Dass Bhalla, Mahima Parkash (Patiala: Language Department, 1971), Vol. II, p. 102.

34. ਨਿਤ ਰਸੋਯਾ ਤੇਰੀਐ ਸਿਉ ਮੈਦਾ ਖਾਣੁ॥  
Adi Granth, Ramkali, var Satta & Balwand, p. 968.

35. Teja Singh and Ganda Singh, A Short History of the Sikhs (Bombay: Orient Longmans Ltd., 1950), p.22.

The intention of Guru Amar Das, according to tradition, was that this well should be the Sikhs tirath, or centre of pilgrimage, and certainly the eighty four steps (corresponding to the traditional eighty-four lakhs of existences with total transmigratory cycle) suggest that the purpose of this well was more than mere provision of drinking water. If we set this new well against the teachings of Guru Nanak we find an apparent contradiction. Guru Nanak with all the characteristic emphasis upon interiority, had declared in very plain terms that there was only one tirath, only one pilgrimage - centre for the true devotee, and that was within his own heart. <sup>36</sup>

The establishment of this place of pilgrimage for the Sikhs may thus be understood in terms of organization of the Sikh movement. According to Fauja Singh, from the time of the third Guru, Guru Amar Das, it began to be felt that the Sikhs should have their own seats of religion and pilgrimages, so that it might not be necessary for them to go to the tiraths (holy places) of the Hindus. <sup>37</sup> From this, it may be deduced that perhaps this was the motive behind the construction of the baoli at Goindwal.

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36. W.H. Macleod, The Evolution of Sikh Community (Delhi-6: Oxford University Press, 2/11, Ansari Road, Darya Ganj, 1975), p.8.

37. Fauja Singh, "Development of Sikhism under the Mughals", al. Sikhism, ed., L.M. Joshi (Patiala: Punjabi University, 1969), p.16.

Before his death, Guru Amar Das nominated his son-in-law, Ram Das, as his successor.<sup>38</sup> The most notable work of Guru Ram Das towards the development of Sikhism was the laying of the foundation of the new township which came to be known after his name as Chak Ram Das Pura or Ramdaspur.<sup>39</sup> The Sikh chroniclers, however, differ on the question of **the year** in which the foundation of this town was laid.<sup>40</sup> It has been suggested by some recent researchers that the Chak was most

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38. It is said that Guru Amar Das was very much impressed by the devotion and piety of his daughter, Bibi Bhani, and her husband Ram Das, called Jetha. According to Twarikh Guru Khalsa, once Bibi Bhani severely injured her hand by placing it under the collapsed leg of the chaunki (stool) on which her father was seated while taking a bath. The Guru, who was deeply moved and overcome with a sense of gratitude, asked Bibi Bhani for any boon. She then begged her father that the office of the Guruship should be made hereditary in her family. The Guru granted this boon and the Guruship became hereditary in the family of Ram Dass. (See p. 341). Guru Arjan was thus the first Sikh Guru who succeeded gur-gaddi on this hereditary principle, though his nomination was also made on this basis of his service, and devotion to the Guru-father and attainment of his spiritual knowledge. But there was definitely a change in the succession of the original concept of guruship.
39. According to Malcom, this town was first named Ram Das Pur. (Malcom, Sketch of the Sikhs) (London: John Murray, 1812), p. 287.
40. Bhai Gian Singh Ji Giani mentions Har 5 Vadi 13, 1627 B.K. (1570 A.D. See: Twarikh Guru Khalsa, (Patiala: Bhasha Vibhag) 1970), Vol. I, p.344; Kesar Singh Chhiber records Samat 1623 (1566 A.D.) See: Bansawalinama Dasan Patshahian Ka, ed., Rattan Singh Jaggi, published in Parkh, Research Bulletin of Panjabi Languages and Literature (Chandigarh: Panjab University, 1972), Vol.II, p. 39; while Cunningham mention the founding of the town in 1577 A.D. A History of the Sikhs, Indian edn. (1849 rpt. Delhi: S. Chand & Company, 1955), p. 46 (f.n.)

probably founded in 1573 A.D. (1630 B.K.).<sup>41</sup> But before the excavation of the tank (later on named Santokhsar), the boundaries of the new settlement were marked, and the township was named Ram Das Pur<sup>42</sup> or Chak Guru Ka.<sup>43</sup> Kilns were laid and hutments were built,<sup>44</sup> and Ram Dass took his abode near that site (later named Guru Ka Mahal). He is said to have started the construction of another tank (later on named Amritsrovar) as per instructions of Guru Amar Das ,<sup>45</sup> on 7th Katrik 1630 B.K. (Nov., 6, 1573 A.D.).<sup>46</sup> But when the work on this project was in full swing, Ram Das had to rush to Goindwal at the call of the dying Guru, Amar Das .<sup>47</sup> The work of the said project was thus suspended for some time. After ascending the Gaddi in 1574 A.D., Guru Ram Das shifted his residence to Amritsar permanently and resumed the work with great zeal. But though this tank was completed during the time of Guru Ram Das yet, in the words of Macauliffe, the sarovar remained kucha till Guru Arjan Dev ascended the gurgaddi in 1581 A.D. The task of making

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41. This has been calculated by Madanjit Kaur, in The Golden Temple, Past & Present (Amritsar: Guru Nanak Dev University, 1983), p. 8.
  42. Bhai Gian Singh Ji Giani, op.cit., p.343.
  43. Bansawalinama Dasan Patshahian Ka, op.cit., p.39.
  44. Ibid.
  45. Bhai Santokh Singh, Sri Gurbartap Suraj Granth, Bhai Vir Singh, 4th edn. (1929 rpt. Amritsar: Khalsa Samachar, 1963), pp. 1691-92.
  46. Bhai Gian Singh Ji Gian, op.cit., p. 344.
  47. Bhai Santokh Singh, op.cit., p. 1692.

the tank pucca and the lining of the stairs on all the four sides with bricks fell on Guru Arjan Dev.<sup>48</sup> It was also he who conceived the idea of building a temple amidst the holy tank, a place of worship with distinct identity.<sup>49</sup>

It is evident from the above description that under the first four gurus, the Sikhs had evolved a theocratic structure with rudimentary socio-religious institutions as well as practices. It certainly had reached developmental stage which may be described as a take off stage in history of the Sikh movement.

#### Personality:

The fifth Nanak of the Sikhs, Guru Arjan Dev was the youngest son of Guru Ram Das, the fourth Guru, and his mother Bibi Bhani,<sup>50</sup> was the younger daughter of Guru Amar Das, the third Guru. Since he inherited the Sikh religious tradition from both the parents, it may rightly be said that he, "was the first Sikh Guru who was born as a Sikh."<sup>51</sup> Imbibing the highest tradition of the Sikhs as he was directly related to the Gurus through his lineage, Guru Arjan, since his very

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48. M.A. Macauliffe, The Sikh Religion, Its Gurus, Sacred Writings and Authors, 2nd edn. (1909 rpt. Delhi: S. Chand and Company Ltd., 1978), Vol. III, p.4.
  49. Bhai Santokh Singh, op.cit., p. 1855; Sarup Dass Bhalla, op.cit., p. 316; Bhai Gian Singh Ji Giani, op.cit., p. 362.
  50. Bhai Gian Singh Ji Giani, Twarikh Guru Khalsa, op.cit., p. 359.
  51. W. Owen Cole & Piara Singh Sambi, The Sikhs, Their Religious Beliefs and Practices (New Delhi: Vikas Publishing House Pvt. Ltd., 1978), p. 24.



birth and experience, he intuitively understood the Sikh movement from within which must have had shaped his outlook. Most scholars have studied the birth of Guru Arjan only from the point of view of hereditary succession, notwithstanding his position being junior to other two brothers. It was on account of being more influenced by the Sikh traditions, his devotion and dedication which made his father Guru Ram Das to select him as his successor.

Born on Baisakh 18, 1610 B.K. i.e. April 14, 1553,<sup>52</sup>

Guru Arjan spent his childhood at Goindwal where his

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52. The date of birth of Guru Arjan is disputed amongst scholars and historians. According to Bansavalinama Dasan Patshahian Ka, (op.cit., p.42), Twarikh Guru Khalsa (op.cit., p.359) and Gurpartap Suraj Granth (op.cit., p.747), he was born on Baisakh 18, 1610 B.K. (April 14, 1553 A.D.). But Teja Singh and Ganda Singh (A Short History of the Sikhs, op.cit., p.26), Macauliffe (The Sikh Religion, op.cit., p.1) and Sahib Singh (Jeevan Virtant Sri Guru Arjan Dev Ji, (Amritsar: Singh Brothers, Mai Sewan, 1969), p.6) mention Baisakh 19 Vadi 7, 1620 (April 15, 1563) as the date of birth of the Guru. Out of these two, the first view that Guru Arjan was born on Baisakh 18, 1610 (April 14, 1553) seems to be more acceptable for the following reasons:

It is supported by Bansavalinama which is the earliest available source over the issue and we have nothing concrete to prove against it. Moreover this is supported by Gurpartap Suraj Granth and Twarikh Guru Khalsa which are other important sources of Sikh history. This view is also held by latter work Gur Pur Parkash by Sant Rain Prem Singh when he writes that Guru Arjan was born on Baisakh 18 Samvat 84 Nanak Sahi which comes to 1610 BK. also. (See: Sant Rain Prem Singh, Sri Gur Pur Parkash Granth (Amritsar: Gyani Press, 1919), p. 269.) Moreover the other version that Guru Nanak was born in 1620 BK. (1563 A.D.) does not seem to correspond with the first marriage of the Guru which was solemnised in 1622 BK. (1565 A.D.) when he was only two years old, for child marriage is disapproved in Sikhism.

Grandfather, Guru Amar Das had built his residence with the permission of Guru Angad.<sup>53</sup> Being a devout follower, it may safely be surmised that Guru Arjan must have had instructions in religion from the greatest authority of the Sikhs i.e. the Sikh Gurus themselves. Being a part and parcel of the religious ferment which prevailed at Goindwal, the seat of the third and fourth Sikh Gurus, Guru Arjan developed keen perception which could be acquired by a highly sensitive and a cultivated mind. Though the Sikh sources are silent about his formal education yet from the later evidences particularly connected with the compilation of the Adi Granth, it can be said, with a fair degree of certainty, that he must have had learnt the Gurmukhi script and seriously studied and contemplated upon the gurbani under the guidance of his father, grand father, and Bhai Budha<sup>54</sup> an acknowledged scholar and a teacher. From the evidence of Guru's own compositions, it can be said that Guru Arjan had thoroughly studied the sacred scriptures, he realized that the most sacred is the Nam.<sup>55</sup> Besides having been initiated into the holy lores in which he distinguished

53. Bhai Santokh Singh, op.cit., p.7.

54. According to Sohan Kavi Hargobind was entrusted to Bhai Budha for imparting education by the fifth Guru, Arjan Dev. See: Gur Bilas Patshahi Chhevin, ed. Inder Singh Gill (Amritsar: Jeevan Mandir Pustkalya, 1968), p.50.

55. ਬਹੁ ਸਾਮਤੁ ਬਹੁ ਸਿਮ੍ਰਿਤੀ ਪੇਖੈ ਸਰਬ ਢਢੋਨਿ॥  
ਪੁਜੈਸਿ ਨਾਗੀ ਹਰਿ ਹਰੇ ਨਾਨਕ ਨਾਮ ਅਮੋਲ ॥ ੨ ॥  
Adi Granth, Gauri, M.5, p.265.

himself notably, he studied Sanskrit, Persian and Braj Bhasha as was the tradition among the Khatris of the Punjab.<sup>56</sup> Guru Arjan was so bright that his grandfather, Guru Amar Das developed warm affection for him and saw the signs of future greatness in him as he hailed him Dohita Bani Ka Bohita<sup>57</sup> or Bani Bohit<sup>58</sup> which means that he would serve as the boat of bani to ferry the people across the ocean of this world.

As regards the marriage of Guru Arjan Dev, many near contemporary sources are silent; however, there are works like Bansavalinama and Twarikh Guru Khalsa<sup>59</sup> and these evidences unanimously hold that Guru Arjan was married for the first time at the age of twelve in 1622 B.K. (1565 A.D.) to Ram Dai daughter of Chandan Dass Khatri. However, there is a

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56. Randhir Singh in his article suggests that Guru Arjan in his childhood learnt Sanskrit from the village Brahmin Kesho and Gopal and Persian from the village school. He however does not cite any documentary evidence in support of his contention. See his article published in Guru Arjan Vishesh Ank, Punjabi Dunia, (Patiala: Bhasha Vibhag, June-July, 1953), p.3.
57. Dr. Sahib Singh, op.cit., p.8; Teja Singh, Ganda Singh, op.cit., p.26.
58. Sarup Dass Bhalla, op.cit., p.308.
59. Bansavalinama Dasan Patshahian Ka suggest that Guru Arjan was married with Ram Dai on 1622 B.K. (1565 A.D.) at village Maur, (op.cit., p.38); Bhai Gian Singh Ji Giani is also of the opinion that the Guru Arjan was married in 1622 B.K. with Ram Dai d/o Chandan Dass Khatri of village Maur. See Twarikh Guru Khalsa, op.cit., p. 359.

difference of opinion regarding the place of his marriage. Twenty four years after the first marriage and after eight years of his succession to gur-gaddi, Arjan Dev was married again to Bibi Ganga of the village Mao<sup>60</sup> in Jullundur district. As the principle of heredity to the gur-gaddi had been established, the second marriage was solemnized in order to beget a successor to the gur-gaddi. Having no issue, Ram Dai, the first wife suffered the humiliating taunts of the ladies of the family of Prithi Chand, the eldest brother of Guru Arjan Dev. She, therefore, persuaded her husband to marry again for begetting a child.<sup>61</sup> It may appear strange these days but was a normal practice in the medieval times. From the second matrimonial relation Guru Hargobind was born on Samat 1652 B.K. (1595 A.D.).<sup>62</sup>

Since his birth in 1553 A.D. till the death of Guru Amar Das, Guru Arjan spent most of his life at Goindwal.<sup>63</sup> During his long sajour there, he was an eye witness to the development of the place as well as the family squabbles.

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60. Bansavalinama Dasan Patshahian Ka, op.cit., pp. 42-44; Bhai Gian Singh Ji Giani, op. cit., p.359; Macauliffe, op.cit., p.43.

61. Ibid., p. 43.

62. Gur Bilas Patshahi Chhevin, op.cit., p.26.

63. According to Dr. Sahib Singh, Arjan Dev spent his eleven and a half years of early life with his grand father Amar Dass. Dr. Sahib Singh, op.cit., p. 7.

His father Guru Ram Das, before his accession to the gur-gaddi, worked hard for the completion of the baoli.<sup>64</sup> Then he was sent to Chak Ram Das Pura alongwith Guru Arjan for the foundation and excavation of the tanks of Amrit-sar and Santokh-sar. Here the young Arjan received the appreciation of architectural designing of buildings, excavating tanks and founding towns.<sup>65</sup> The work of Amritsar (Chak Ram Das Pura) was still in progress when Ram Das had suddenly proceeded to Goindwal on receiving the call from Guru Amar Das.<sup>66</sup> According to Mahima Parkash the third Guru, Amar Das personally installed Guru Ram Das as his successor and departed from this world in Samvat 1631 (1574 A.D.).<sup>67</sup> Following the Sikh tradition, Guru Ram Das shifted his headquarter to Chak Ram Das Pura where he made strenuous efforts to complete the construction of the tanks, the work entrusted to him by Guru Amar Das. Before his death in 1638 BK. (1581 A.D.), Guru Ram Das, nominated Guru Arjan Dev as his successor much to the chagrin of Prithi Chand, who being the eldest son thought it to be his legitimate right to succeed his father on the hereditary principle of

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64. M.L. Peace, Guru Arjan Dev (Ferozpur city: D.S. Bhalla, Krishan Nagar, 1969), p.4.

65. Ibid., pp. 4-5.

66. Bhai Santokh Singh, op.cit., p. 1692.

67. Sarup Dass Bhalla, op.cit., pp. 264-271.

succession.<sup>68</sup> Being arrogant, covetous and too worldly, his claim to gur-gaddi was ignored. Similarly, the right of Mahadev, the second son was also not seriously considered as he had no religious bent of mind nor was he interested in the gur-gaddi.<sup>69</sup> Guru Arjan, the youngest son on the other hand, was a devout follower and possessed all the qualities of head and heart to deserve the succession. By dint of his complete obedience and scholastic achievements, he had won the heart of his father.<sup>70</sup> His scholastic understanding of the bani is amply demonstrated by the compilation of Adi-Granth. Regarding his obedience to his father, it may be illustrated by an event which occurred in 1631 B.K. (1574 A.D.). In that year, Sahari Mal, the eldest brother of Guru Ram Das, came personally to invite the Guru to grace the occasion of his son's marriage at Lahore by his presence. Unable to attend personally the marriage of his nephew, Guru Ram Das asked Prithi Chand, his eldest son, to accompany his uncle. On his refusal and that of Mahadev, the second son, the Guru asked Arjan Dev to proceed to Lahore to represent him at the marriage. He readily accepted it and agreed to stay as long as he was not summoned to return.<sup>71</sup>

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68. Bhai Gian Singh Ji Giani, op.cit., pp. 356-58.

69. Ibid., pp. 354.

70. Ibid., pp. 354-358.

71. Ibid., p. 354; Randhir Singh, loc.cit., p.4.

Guru Arjan complied with the instruction of his Guru-father by remaining at Lahore for some months, awaiting his permission to return to Amritsar. At last, he got impatient, for the separation from the Guru caused him the greatest torment and agony. He wrote three letters one after another expressing his state of mind and agony of his soul caused by the separation from his Guru-father.<sup>72</sup> But the first two of them were intercepted by Prithi Chand and could not reach the hands of the Guru.<sup>73</sup> It was his third letter which could reach the hands of Guru Ram Das which was written with a fervent appeal for summoning him to Amritsar.<sup>74</sup> Guru Ram Das was very much pleased with the obedience, devotion and scholastic traits of Arjan evident from the three letters addressed to him.<sup>75</sup> Arjan was consequently summoned to Amritsar. After this event Guru Ram Das was convinced that it was Arjan who deserved to be his successor, and he himself installed him to gur-gaddi

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72. Adi Granth, Majh, M.5, p.96.

73. Bhai Gian Singh Ji Giani, op.cit., p.355.

74. ਇਕ ਘੜੀ ਨਾ ਮਿਲਤੇ ਤਾਂ ਕਲਜੁਗ ਹੋਤਾ। ਹੁਣ ਕਦਿ ਮਿਲੀਐ ਪ੍ਰਿਥਾ ਤੁਧ ਭੀਗਵੀਤਾ।  
ਮੋਹਿ ਰੈਣਿ ਨ ਵਿਹਾਵੈ ਨੀਦ ਨਾ ਆਵੈ ਦੇਖੇ ਗੁਰ ਦਰਬਾਰੇ ਜੀਓ ॥ 3 ॥  
ਰਹੁ ਘੋਲਿ ਜੀਉ ਘੋਲਿ ਘੁਆਈ ਤਿਸ ਸਚੇ ਗੁਰ ਦਰਬਾਰੇ ਜੀਓ ॥ 1 ॥

Adi Granth, Majh, M.5, p. 97.

75. On the indication of the third letter Guru Ram Das got two letters from Prithi Chand. The latter's behaviour annoyed the Guru a great deal.

in 1638 B.K. (i.e. 1581 A.D.).<sup>76</sup> The author of Gur Bilas Patshahi Chhevin<sup>77</sup> and the author of Sri Gurpartap Suraj Granth also concurs with the view that Ram Das bestowed the Guruship upon Guru Arjan with his own hands. However, the author of Mahima Parkash, does not agree to this view and instead believes that Guru Arjan was installed to the gur-gaddi by his maternal uncle Mohri after Guru Ram Das's death.<sup>79</sup> This view is also supported by latter European writers like M.A. Macauliffe.<sup>80</sup> But the evidence contained in the Bhatt Swayyas seems to be more reliable, according to which Guru Arjan was installed as the fifth Guru by Guru Ram Das himself and none else.<sup>81</sup>

It was the first instance in the Sikh history that gur-gaddi was succeeded by the son on the basis of his unquestioning obedience, selfless devotion, scholastic traits and spiritual attainments and it was not a mere succession in terms of Hindu law of succession.

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76. Giani Gian Singh Ji Giani, op.cit., p. 357;  
Dr. Sahib Singh, op.cit., p. 10.
77. Gur Bilas Patshahi Chhevin, op.cit., p. 19.
78. Bhai Santokh Singh, op.cit., p. 865.
79. Sarup Dass Bhalla, op.cit., p. 309.
80. M.A. Macauliffe, op.cit., p.1.
81. Adi Granth, Bhatt Sawayas (Harbans), p. 1481.



As was expected, Prithi Chand took the succession of Guru Arjan with jealousy and contempt and raised a serious controversy over it.<sup>82</sup> Putting forth his claim, he asserted that he was the legitimate heir according to the prevalent Hindu law of succession. Opposing Guru Arjan's succession vehemently, he went to the extent of conspiring with the Mughal officials of the court to dethrone Arjan and become the Guru himself.<sup>83</sup> But Guru Arjan with his spirit of humility and saintliness did not grudge his deeds, instead gave Prithi Chand all his property which brought him rich income. For the community works and that of the langar he depended upon the offerings brought in cash or kind by the sangats.<sup>84</sup> Not satisfied with this, Prithi Chand started intercepting the cash offerings of the sangats coming to the Guru through his clever agents.<sup>85</sup> Though utterly worldly, Prithi Chand aspired to be the Guru. Failing to secure succession he began to hold parallel darbar as the Guru, first at Goindwal and then at other places wherever Guru Arjan went,<sup>86</sup> thus

82. Bansavalinama Dasan Patshahian Ka, op.cit., pp. 43, 45; Randhir Singh, loc. cit., pp. 10, 12, 13.

83. ਚੇਰੀ ਚੇਰੀ ਨਾਲ ਉਨਾ ਦੇ ਸਲੂਕ ਠਹਰਾਇਆ । ਨਾਲ ਕਛੂ ਵਡੀ ਦੇਣਾ ਕਰਾਇਆ ।  
ਇਸ ਪਾਸਉ ਗੁਰਿਆਈ ਲਈਐ ਛੁਡਾਇ । ਇਸਨੂੰ ਛਡੀਐ ਕੈਦ ਪਵਾਇ ।  
Ibid., p.46.

84. Santokh Singh, op.cit., Ansu 2, Ras 29, p. 1763.

85. M.L. Peace, op.cit., p.15.

86 ਪਿਤਾ ਵਾਕ ਨਾ ਮੋਲੇ ਵਡਿਆ । ਤਾਂ ਤੇ ਭੋਗਾ ਨਿਆਰਾ ਕਵਿਆ ।30।  
ਪ੍ਰਿਥੀਏ ਕੇ ਭੀ ਚਲਿ ਉਥੇ ਆਏ । ਪਿਛਾ ਨਾ ਛਡਨ ਜਿਥੇ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਜਾਏ ।33।  
Bansavalinama Dasan Patshahian Ka, op.cit., p.43,45,  
Guru Arjan Vishesh Ank, op.cit., pp. 15, 17-18.

causing embarrassment to Guru Arjan as well as the sangats. According to Bansavalinama, Prithi Chand even got compiled bani of the previous four Gurus and got recorded some hymns in his own praise.<sup>87</sup> It, therefore, became a difficult problem for the Sikhs to decide about the genuineness<sup>ne</sup> of the bani and there was a danger of bani being interpolated. Prithi Chand and his agents clandestinely appropriated the collections from the sangats. In the absence of the contributions from the sangat, it became very difficult for Guru Arjan to maintain and carry on the community langar.<sup>88</sup>

#### Perceptions:

By the time Arjan was installed as the fifth guru in 1581 A.D.,<sup>89</sup> the Sikh movement had become a socio-religious movement struggling to come out of the early phase of its evolution. However, the growing Sikh movement till then did not face any serious internal or external challenge. But with the growth of its popularity and on the basis of his own experience Guru Arjan on his accession to the gur-gaddi perceived the impending internal crisis due to organizational

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87. Ibid., p.50.

88. Guru Arjan Vishesh Ank, op.cit., p.16.

89. Bhai Gian Singh ji Giani, op.cit., p. 359.

weaknesses and external challenges from the citadals of Hindu and Muslim orthodoxy. The internal crisis due to the challenge of Prithi Chand, the elder brother of Guru Arjan Dev who extended his claim to the guruship,<sup>90</sup> increase in the number of Sikhs,<sup>91</sup> precarious financial position due to pilfering of the offerings,<sup>92</sup> lack of any definite scripture and dependence on corporeal Guru, needed urgent and immediate attention of the Guru. In this part an attempt has been made to analyse the perceptions of these weaknesses and challenges, and the measures conceived by Guru Arjan Dev to consolidate the Sikh movement to successfully meet those dangers.

With the installation of Arjan Dev as the fifth guru, the principle of heredity came to be accepted. Though it was in accordance with the Indian tradition yet it was certainly contrary to the principle of succession established by the previous gurus who believed in the practice of choosing the best person out of the entire brotherhood. It seems that Guru Arjan became acutely conscious of the violation of the

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90. Bansavalinama Dasan Patshahian Ka, op.cit., pp. 43,45.

91. Guru Nanak and Nanak Panthis, Extract translated in English from Dabistan-i-Mazahib by Ganda Singh published in Panjab Past and Present, Vol. II, 1969, p. 51; Guru Arjan Vishesh Ank, op.cit., p. 35.

92. M.L. Peace, op.cit., p.35.

original concept of guruship<sup>93</sup> when Prithi Chand extended his claim on the basis of being the eldest son<sup>94</sup> which incidently was in accordance with the Hindu law of succession. He realized his vulnerable position particularly in the eyes of those who were yet to join the ranks of the Sikh faith. Therefore, it was apprehended that the hereditary principle and the schemes of Prithi Chand could harm the interest of the Sikh movement. Moreover, it was also possible that the hereditary guru might become authoritarian<sup>95</sup> which might adversely affect the movement. It was therefore not advisable to underrate the threat of Prithi Chand. Being the eldest son of the fourth Guru, Prithi Chand's position as the leader of the Sikh movement was fairly sound for he also inherited the sacred authority of his father, even though he was not installed as the Guru. Aggrieved as he was, he naturally made efforts to create parallel institutions. The establishment of the parallel gurudom<sup>96</sup> and a parallel Sikh centre<sup>97</sup> are evidences to prove

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93. Niharanjan Ray, The Sikh Gurus and the Sikh Society (Patiala: Punjabi University, 1970), p. 98.

94. Bhai Gian Singh ji Giani, op.cit., pp. 356-357; also see: Bansavalinama, op.cit., pp. 42, 43 & 45-46.

95. Niharanjan Ray, op.cit., p.15.

96. Ibid., p. 70.

97. Bhai Gian Singh ji Giani, op.cit., p. 395; Sahib Singh, op.cit., p.43.

the above contention and that formed serious challenge, particularly as it was coming from a member of the family of the Guru himself. It caused a very awkward situation for the Sikh followers and threatened the movement (of) schism.

It may also be pointed out that the misdeeds of Prithi Chand caused financial embarrassment to Guru Arjan because it is stated that he used to intercept the cash offerings of the sangat through his agents.<sup>98</sup> It is believed that Prithi Chand clandestinely amassed wealth which actually belonged to the Guru and his sangat.<sup>99</sup> Besides creating financial crisis, it could bring discredit to the Guru himself particularly in the eyes of the Sikhs who used to make regular offerings but were not aware of the seizure of offerings by Prithi Chand. Moreover, with the depletion of the central treasury, it had become difficult for the Guru to maintain the langar<sup>100</sup> and to undertake and complete projects for the welfare of the people and the community.

In the absence of any codified scripture, the Sikh movement was confronted with the **danger** of disintegration because Prithi Chand, the elder brother of the Guru, it is

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98. Ibid., p. 360; M.L. Peace, op.cit., p.15.

99. Sarup Dass Bhalla, op.cit., pp. 259-263; Bhai Gian Singh Ji Giani, op.cit., p. 358.

100. Guru Arjan Vishesh Ank, op.cit., p.16; Bhai Gian Singh Ji Giani, op.cit., p. 260.

stated, had compiled a granth<sup>101</sup> and was trying to wean away the followers from the main stream of the Sikh movement. In the face of such a situation, Guru's followers who were staying far away from the Guru were facing great problems to decide about the genuineness of the bani.

The external situation, to begin with, was quite favourable for Guru Arjan because "there is no doubt that so long as Akbar was on the throne at Agra, the Mughal policy of non-interference helped the Sikh community, both directly and indirectly, to further their socio-religious and socio-economic interest."<sup>102</sup> Even Prithi Chand's complaint that the Adi Granth contained some blasphemous passages offensive to Islam was dismissed with honour.<sup>103</sup> It may be further noted that the reign of Akbar which spans the lives of two gurus, and by far the largest part of Guru Arjan, is the formative period of Sikhism and Sikh society.<sup>104</sup> It is held by some scholars that it was during the twenty five years of Arjan's ministry that the compilation of the Granth was completed, and the Sikh Church truly established. The number of conversions increased rapidly, much to the danger

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101. Bansavalinama Dassan Patshahian Ka, op.cit., p.50.

102. Niharanjan Ray, op.cit., p.37.

103. According to Bhai Gian Singh Ji Giani, Akbar was so much impressed with the wisdom contained in the Adi Granth that he made an offering of 51 mohars (gold coins) to the holy book and robes of honour to the Sikhs and one for the Guru. (See Twarikh Guru Khalsa, p. 409).

104. Niharanjan Ray, op.cit., p.37.

of orthodox Hindus and Muslim fundamentalists<sup>105</sup> who became bitter and inimical towards Guru Arjan Dev. The Hindu orthodoxy was antagonistic to the Guru because the important Sikh institutions were marking out separate identity as these had started taking definite shape with sacred scripture, casteless social group under the single leadership of the guru and a specific code of conduct. This had given a severe blow to the caste prejudices and to the domination of the priestly class. On the other hand, the Muslim fundamentalists could not bear the rapid development of Sikhism because "the growth of Sikhism blocked the further progress of Islam in Punjab".<sup>106</sup> With the ascendancy of Jahangir to the Mughal throne in 1605, the Muslim fundamentalists got an opportunity to intrigue and conspire against Guru Arjan as the former had ascended the throne with their help.<sup>107</sup> Moreover, Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi (1563-1624) who was the head of the Naqashbandi movement, was extremely jealous of the growing popularity and power of Guru Arjan. An adherent to the revivalism of Islam, he "made the revival of the orthodoxy something of a movement."<sup>108</sup> It is believed that the Shaikh incited Jahangir against Guru Arjan when he was called on by the latter at Sirhind in pursuit of Khusro. The Shaikh had also great influence on the

105. M.J. Akbar, India: The Siege Within (Middlesex (England): Penguin Books Ltd. Harmonds Worth, 1985), p. 118; also see A.B. Pande, Later Medieval India (Allahabad: Central Book Depot, 1963), p.249.

106. Fauja Singh, loc. cit., p.10.

107. R.P. Tripathi, Rise and Fall of the Mughal Empire (Allahabad: Central Book Depot, 1956), p.340.

108. M. Mujeeb, The Indian Muslims (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1967), p.243.

courtiers of Jahangir.<sup>109</sup> Under their influence the state policy underwent a transformation towards the Sikh movement and Guru Arjan had to think in terms of changed political situation.

It is evident that the Sikh sangats had witnessed a great increase in their number<sup>110</sup> and were established at far off places. In the absence of faster means of communication, it was necessary to organize the movement and to give proper direction to it so that it could continue to serve the purpose for which it was established.

Guru Arjan perceived this situation and responded to it like a thinker and organizer. He took concrete measures for the organization of the Sikh religion and Sikh community by imparting it definite lineament. In this direction, some significant organizational measures were taken by the Guru.

First of all, Guru Arjan thought "it very necessary to reorganise the existing system of missionaries and give a permanent character to those missionaries who had been appointed by his predecessors to preach Sikhism and collect offerings made by the followers."<sup>111</sup> The system as organized by the Guru is popularly known as the institution of masand.<sup>112</sup>

109. Ibid., p. 247.

110. Guru Nanak & Nanak Panthis, p.15.

111. H.R. Gupta, History of the Sikh Gurus ( New Delhi: U.C. Kapoor & Sons, 1973), p.90.

112. Masand is a converted and shorter form of Persian word Masnad -i-ali which means elevated office or high seat and this word was used by the Afghan Kings while addressing their nobles in writing.



Under this system, the missionaries who hithertofore catered to the spiritual needs of the Sikhs and collected voluntary offerings from the Sikh sangats were termed as the masands. He fixed 'daswandh',<sup>113</sup> i.e. one tenth of the income of the faithful and its deposit into the central treasury through the medium of masand annually.<sup>114</sup> This institution is important in terms of economic viability as with this measure the Guru not only strengthened and regulated the finances of the Sikh church to meet the expenses of welfare works of the people, but also forged discipline and commitment on the part of the sangat towards the Guru and the Sikh church. Above all, with the establishment of this institution, the Guru could organize and integrate the far flung sangats with the central authority or with the Guru as the masands were the links of the organization and two-way channels of communication between the Guru and the sangat.<sup>115</sup>

In order to create cohesion among the Sikhs, Guru Arjan realized the need of providing definite scripture of faith i.e., Adi Granth around which they could gather and in

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113. Sikh term 'tithe' paid by the faithful for the Guru's funds fixed by Guru Arjan Dev.

114. Gokul Chand Narang, op.cit., pp. 43 & 44 (f.n.); W. Owen Cole, Piara Singh Sambhi, The Sikhs, Their Religious Beliefs and Practices (New Delhi: Vikas Publishing House Pvt. Ltd., 1978), p. 25; H.R. Gupta, op.cit., p.90.

115. Jagjit Singh, op.cit., p.18.

accordance with its injunction they could also regulate their spiritual and social life. He also felt the necessity of compiling a granth due to the following reasons:

- (a) It would avoid deviation and interpolation of the bani at the hands of his elder brother.
- (b) He desired to adjust the authority of the guru and that of the Adi Granth in such a way that it should symbolise merger of each other both in unison representing the authority of the guru.
- (c) Guru Arjan also perceived a dire need to provide some local forums which might not be subject to the limit of space and time in terms of the nature of personal character of guruship. The existing Institution of dharamsala, no doubt, was such a forum but it was sacred as long as there was an assembly of the sangats as the Guru was considered mystically present in the sangat. But with the installation of Adi-Granth, Guru Arjan wanted to provide symbolic presence of the guru to these dharamsalas where they could assemble in the presence of the Guru in the form of gur sangat, recite, meditate the

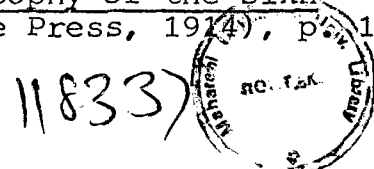
Divine nam , purge off their minds of evil thoughts, acquire spiritual knowledge and virtues for becoming a gurmukh or a true Sikh.

With these main objectives in view, Guru Arjan hastened the process of compilation of the Adi Granth<sup>116</sup> and while doing so, he also perceived that the Granth should not only contain the bani of the Sikh Gurus but also the bani of the other bhaktas, saints and bards irrespective of caste, class and creed whose teachings were identical with those of the Sikh Gurus. Thus, he **imparted** universal and liberal character to the institution of Adi Granth which went a long way in bringing harmony and peace in the society and development of Sikhism, and, at the same time, it saved Sikhism from consistent attacks of unhealthy tenets and rituals. The holy Granth dropped the Puranic citations which were formerly repeated on the occasion of Hindu marriages and deaths. It is very significant because such a step emancipated Sikhism from the hold of brahmans, if any was yet left.<sup>117</sup> He gave them a scripture which could guide them in conducting their spiritual and social life. By giving scriptural autonomy, he also raised the followers of Guru Nanak in the social scale and united them by common religious ties.<sup>118</sup>

116 According to Kesar Singh Chhiber, it seems that Guru Arjan had already initiated the process needed to compile the Granth (See: Bansavalinama Dassan Patshahian Ka, op.cit., p. 51).

117. Khazan Singh, History and Philosophy of the Sikh Religion, (Lahore: Nawal Kishore Press, 1974), p. 123.

118. Ibid.



Guru Arjan also felt the need of creating new Sikh centres of pilgrimage for catering to the spiritual and social needs of the Sikhs and Sikh sangats where they could meet, assemble and meditate on God's name. The founding of Sri Harimandir at Amritsar was a landmark in this respect.<sup>119</sup> According to later Sikh traditions, Mian Mir, a very famous sufi saint was invited by Guru Arjan who laid the foundation of this building.<sup>120</sup> Besides, Harimandir at Amritsar, Tarn Taran, (in the heart of Majha), Kartarpur in Jalandhar Doab, and a baoli in Dabbi Bazar, Lahore, were some other important Sikh centres which were created by Guru Arjan to serve the needs of the Sikhs. According to some scholars, these centres were destined to replace the traditional pilgrimage centres of the Hindus.<sup>121</sup> But the aim in establishing these institutions was to provide the autonomy and impart unique status to the Sikhs in that society.

Guru Arjan provided the Sikhs the Harimandir as the first gurdwara<sup>122</sup> after the installation of Adi Granth in 1604 A.D. in its central hall. This process grew like a fission in accordance with the "injunction of the fifth

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- 119. Madanjit Kaur, Golden Temple: Past & Present (Amritsar: Guru Nanak Dev University, 1983), p. 143.
  - 120. The Punjab Notes and Queries (1849-1884), Vol. I, typed copy in Sikh Reference Library, Amritsar, n.d., p. 141.
  - 121. Fauja Singh, loc.cit., pp. 16-17; Niharanjan Ray, op.cit., p. 71.
  - 122. Gurdwara literally means the abode of the Guru.

Guru".<sup>123</sup> The copies of the Adi Granth were subsequently made and installed in other Sikh centres such as at the dharamsala of Guru Nanak at Kartarpur (now in Pakistan), the shrine of Khadur, Goindwal, Tarn Taran and Kartarpur in Jullundur Doab etc. and these gurdwaras emerged as important Sikh forums of the sangat where the Sikhs could assemble, meditate, recite the Divine nam in the presence of the Guru (Adi Granth) to purge off their inner filth and acquire spiritual knowledge and human virtues. The aim of the Guru in the creation of these forums was to provide suitable environment for bringing a change in the outlook of the Sikhs by absorbing them in constant communion with the Lord and performance of social service to the Guru and the sangat in many ways.

Guru Arjan diagnosed the prevailing situation of his time within the Sikh community and outside it, and responded to it like a true spiritual leader, a great thinker and an able organizer. His decision to train his son, Hargobind

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123. ਬਹੁਤ ਉਤਾਰੇ ਜਗ ਮਹਿ ਥਾਵੇ  
ਘਰ ਘਰ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ ਪ੍ਰਕਾਸ਼ ਕਰਾਵੇ ॥ 28 ॥

Sant Rain Prem Singh, Gur Pur Parkash  
(Amritsar: Giani Press, 1919), Vol. II, p. 665.

in the use of arms is indicative of his clear perception of the difficult times ahead for the Sikh movement.<sup>124</sup>

124. (i) ਸੁਸਤ੍ਰੁ ਸੁਸਤ੍ਰੁ ਕੀ ਵਿਦਿਆ ਪਾਈ।  
ਹਰਿ ਗੋਬਿੰਦ ਮਨਿ ਅਤਿ ਹਰਖਾਈ।

Gur Bilas Patshahi Chhevin, op.cit., p.50.

- (ii) ਜਬ ਦੁਆਦਸ ਬਰਖ ਰੂਪ ਪ੍ਰਭ ਪਾਰਾ।  
ਬਾਹਨਿ ਬਿਦਿਆ ਦ੍ਰਿੜ ਸਭ ਕਰਾ।  
ਚੜਿ ਬਾਹਨ ਸੁਸਤ੍ਰੁ ਬਿਦਿਆ ਕੈ ਪਾਰੇ।  
ਸਭ ਅਸਤ੍ਰੁ ਸਸਤ੍ਰੁ ਨੈ ਖੜਗ ਨਿਵਾਰੇ।

Sarup Dass Bhalla, op.cit., p. 395.

- (iii) ਬਿੰਦਯਾ ਦਈ ਸਿਖਾਇ ਸੁਭ ਬਲੀ ਪੜ੍ਹਬੈ ਕੇਰ।  
ਬਾਚਕ ਹੋਏ ਸਕਨ ਕੇ ਪਢਤਿ ਨ ਨਿਵਤਿ ਦੇਰ॥43॥  
ਸੁਸਤ੍ਰੁ ਕੀ ਬਿੰਦਯਾ ਮਹਾਂ ਤਿਸੇਰੇ ਬਰ ਦੇ ਦੀਨਿ।  
ਬਲ ਪ੍ਰਹਾਰਨਿ ਅਨਿਕ ਬਿਧਿ ਔਚਨਿ ਧਨੁਖ ਪ੍ਰਬੀਨ॥  
ਪੜਗ ਪ੍ਰਹਾਰਨਿ ਸਿਪਰ ਗਹਿ ਤਨ ਬਚਾਇ ਕਰ ਦਾਵ॥...  
ਹੋਨਿ ਮਹਾਂ ਅਸਵਾਰ ਤੁਰੰਗਮ ਦੀਰਘ ਛੋਲ ਕੁਦਾਇ ਭੁਜਾਵੈ।

Bhai Santokh Singh, op.cit., p. 2047.

- (iv) He (Bhai Budha) instructed him in the sacred lore and taught him the use of offensive and defensive weapons, besides riding, hunting, wrestling and many other sports.

Teja Singh and Ganda Singh, op.cit., p.39.

- (v) "Foreseeing the difficult times that were ahead Guru Arjan introduced military training. He not only gave military training to Hargobind and other boys of his age, but employed highly accomplished and skilled warriors to build the nucleus of Hargobind's army."

Dr. Tarlochan Singh, Gur Teg Bahadur - Prophet and Martyr, (Delhi: Sikh Gurdwara Board, 1975) p. 17; also see: Kartar Singh, Sikh Itihas (Amritsar: Shiromani Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee, 1977), Vol. I, p. 229; Gopal Singh also mentions that Guru applied his mind to the training of Hargobind in riding, the use of weapons... (For detail see: A History of the Sikh People (London: World Sikh University Press, 1979), p.82.

The period of Guru Arjan Dev, as is evident from the above discussion, is a landmark in terms of his perception of challenges and imparting orientation to the evolution of Sikhism. It is during this period that Sikhism began to acquire contours of an organized religion and recognisable autonomous identity of its own. He gave them the granth, the symbolic significance of which can be equated with the Bible, the Quran, and the Bhagwat Gita. He established the central place of worship which became the centre of pilgrimage of the Sikhs as the Mecca for the Muslims, and Rome for the Christians. His most significant contribution was the implicit investment of sacred authority in the Adi Granth which was considered by the Guru himself more sacred than his own authority as he always gave to the Granth higher status and place than to his own self. By organizing the masand system, and finances of the central treasury, <sup>he</sup> not only eliminated the challenge of Prithi Chand but also made it economically self sufficient for the growing church. By preparing the Sikhs to meet the external challenge of the Mughal authority and the Hindu Muslim orthodoxy, he not only protected and perpetuated the Sikh movement on an even keel but also made it almost self-generating, self-accelerating, and self-defending. Thus, due to his keen perception and steering direction, the Sikh movement entered into the phase of early youth in its career.

### CHAPTER III

#### SIKH INSTITUTIONS: THE GURU, THE GRANTH AND THE GURDWARA

The guru, the granth and the gurdwara form a kind of triumvirate at the apex of vast network of institutions closely linked with each other. Collectively they constitute the nucleus of Sikh religious and social institutions. They are so integrated that without any one of them the organization of Sikh religion and society can not be conceived. These institutions, as we shall study in the following pages, do not in any way overlap or contradict, rather they complement to illuminate the significance of one another. It is in this context that an attempt shall be made to grasp these institutions as extension of the nucleus i.e. the Sabad Guru.

#### The Guru:

The term guru is a generic one, and means a teacher, both spiritual and moral, a brahman, an elderly scholar, ancestor or father. But in traditional Indian thought it is a concept which has a definite connotation.<sup>1</sup> Without going into the details of various categories of gurus elaborated in the Indian religious tradition, we may mention that here we are mainly concerned with the elevation of a

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1. In the Indian tradition the word guru has a very wide connotation and includes all kinds of persons both male and female including the near relatives. For detail see: B.B. Chaubey, "The Nature of Guruship according to the Hindu scriptures", The Nature of Guruship, ed. Clarence O. McMullen (Delhi: I.S.P.C.K., 1976), p. 13; Richard Lannoy, The Speaking Tree (London: Oxford University Press, 1971), p.346.



sage to the status of guru at the head of religious community. This concept of 'guru' is comparatively a recent one emerging alongwith tantrism in the Indian tradition. To grasp the significance of the concept of 'guru', it is necessary to make etymological analysis of the word guru' which in Sanskrit consists of <sup>the</sup> root word 'gur' which means 'to raise', 'to lift up', 'to hurt', 'to kill', 'to make effort', 'to eat' and 'to go', and 'u' is added to make it a noun. The word guru in this sense means the one who is a renouncer and has achieved union with God. He is one who conquers the ignorance and is capable of dispelling it. The etymological study of the term 'guru' in tantrika tradition means 'guh' or 'guha' which signifies darkness and 'ru' what restrains; accordingly, he who restrains darkness of ignorance is the guru.<sup>2</sup> The perfected sage or a renouncer after achieving Jivan-Mukti or individual liberation returns to the society to play a role of a mirror in which society finds its own glimpse and attains unity. His role is to see the inter-connected meanings of things. In the highly structured Indian society, the role of the liberated one was eventually institutionalized during the Bhakti movement and thus guru began to be designated as the founder of the religious community. Worshipped as a semi-divine figure, dependent on voluntary offerings (donations),

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2. Kularnava Tantra;., XVII. 7 c.f. The Nature of Guruship, ibid., p.9.

the guru institutionalized his life and teachings and thus became a sacred authority and was worshipped as an embodiment of Truth, and who radiated a beneficent numen. Such a guru began to give initiation and in this process played a very significant social role.

Ostensibly it may look that the tradition of sectarian gurus with the Puranika and Tantrika traditions perhaps helped in the establishment of the lineage of the guruship among the Sikhs, but in the Sikh lore, the historic guru (the guru as purusha) is not the guru but the word, the voice of the Supreme Lord which He concealed in order to be revealed as would be evident from the subsequent discussion. Nevertheless, in the bani of the Sikh Gurus, and in the writings of Bhai Gurdas there is a metaphoric use of the word jot (light) to denote sabad (word) which was the transcendental Being of Supreme Lord or the Primal Guru.<sup>3</sup> This was the same sabad jot which Guru Nanak assumed at the time of his union with the Supreme Lord and was transmitted from one Guru to another till it was merged into the Granth. It is because of this unity and continuity of the sabad jot that all the Sikh Gurus were designated as Nanak, I, II, III and so on, and not by their names, in the lineage of their spiritual succession. Thus

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3. According to Sikhism, the entire creation came into existence out of His Self at His Will with the expression of one Word:

ਕੀਤਾ ਪਸਾਉ ਏਕੋ ਕਵਾਉ॥ ਤਿਸਤੇ ਹੋਏ ਲਖ ਦਰਿਆਉ॥

Adi Granth, Japuji, p.3.

there is an unbroken continuity, and the sabad, and the guru and the bani are viewed as One.<sup>4</sup>

In this perspective of Indian tradition, here an attempt has been made to delineate the Sikh concept of guru. As guru has been viewed in the Sikh tradition as an essential part for the liberation of individual, we may here briefly preface our discussion with the problem of Guru Nanak having attained salvation or mukti without having any living guru. The near contemporary account of Bhai Gurdas clearly suggests that Guru Nanak was the prophet and direct messenger of God who was sent to the world by the beneficent Lord by proclaiming the mantra of True Name for the redemption of the Dark Age. He writes, "Hearing (mankind's) cry the Beneficent Lord sent Guru Nanak into the world, (Although himself the Guru) he performed the (humble) service of washing feet (and so) providing charana-mrit (for) his Sikhs to drink, In the Dark Age (with multitudes of deities) he revealed that there is but One, the Supreme God (He made firm) the base of four pillar of dharma, and of the four varnas he created one. He regarded King and the beggar as equal and caused the virtue of humility to be practised in this world .... Baba Nanak redeemed the Dark Age by proclaiming the mantra of True name. Guru Nanak came for the redemption

4. ਏਕੋ ਗੁਰੂ ਇਕਾ ਬਾਣੀ, ਇਕੋ ਸਬਦ ਦਿਚਾਰੁ ।

Ibid., Sorath, M.5, p. 646.

of the Dark Age !"<sup>5</sup> It may be noted that this view of Bhai Gurdas is quite similar to the one propounded in the Gita i.e. the concept of sending saviours or prophets by the Supreme Lord to this world from time to time to guard righteousness, to destroy the evil doers and to **restore dharma** whenever dharma fails against adharma.<sup>6</sup>

Bhai Gurdas does not seem to be consistent in his thought as in the subsequent pauri wherein Guru Nanak is stated to have received grace first at the court (of God) and afterwards went forth to labour. He is said to have performed great austerities, to the supreme satisfaction of God. As a consequence, in Sachkhand, Nanak was robed with honour and nine treasures of the Divine name and the virtues of humility were imparted to him. Baba Nanak meditated, and beholding the whole world in flames, he realized that without the guru there was darkness, and from it, there issued the cry of the people's lamentation. Baba Nanak assumed human form and . . . came to transform the people of the world.<sup>7</sup> It is evident that Guru Nanak and his successors led the life of

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5. Varan Bhai Gurdas, ed. Bhai Vir Singh, 8th edn. (1911 rpt. Amritsar: Khalsa Smachar, 1972), Var 1, pauri 23 p. 19; also see: W.H. McLeod, "The Life of Guru Nanak according to Bhai Gurdas", pub. Panjab Past & Present (Patiala: Punjabi University, 1969), Vol. III, p.33.
  6. Gita, IV, 6-9 (tr. Barnett) cf. Anil Chander Banerjee, Guru Nanak and His Times, (Patiala: Punjabi University, 1971), p.97.
  7. Varan Bhai Gurdas, op.cit., pp. 33-34.

ordinary human beings and as such had to struggle hard through constant discipline of knowledge, love, dedication and service to the humanity to earn the grace of God. After having achieved all this and having surrendered themselves to the Will of Divine, sanctified, perfect and holy, they became the Guru.<sup>8</sup> Therefore, it was logically persumed that Guru Nanak and his successors had no attributes of being prophets or avtars like Rama and Krishana and many others of the Hindu tradition. But the Prachin Janam Sakhi tradition clearly holds that the Guru Nanak had no human guru, the God Himself was his Guru. It says,

one day Guru Nanak was taken to the Court of of Sachkhand (dargah Sach Khand Ki) when he entered into the river of Bein to have a bath. There Guru had an interview with the Parmeshar (Almighty Lord) and He had offered him a cup of 'amrit' (namr) which he drank and charged him with the mission of preaching the glory of His name (word/sabad)"<sup>9</sup> Then came the order: "Nanak I am with thee. Through thee will my name be magnified. Whosoever follows thee, him will I save. Go into the world to pray and teach mankind how to pray. Be not he sullied by the ways of the world. Let your life be one of the praise of the Word (nam) charity (dan), ablution (isnan), service (seva) . . . . Nanak I gave thee My pledge. Let this be thy life's mission."<sup>10</sup> Then came the order again: "Nanak on whom thy favourable look is, on his is also mine. My name is: The Supreme Braham (Parbraham Parmeshar), The Supreme Lord and thy name is: the Guru, Parmeshar.<sup>11</sup>

8. Teja Singh, Sikhism, Its Ideals and Institutions, 5th edn. (1938 rpt. Amritsar: Khalsa Brothers, Mai Sewan, 1970), p.19.
9. Puratan Janam Sakhi, ed. Bhai Vir Singh, 9th edn. (rpt. 1926, Amritsar: Khalsa Smachar, Hall Bazar, 1982), p.40.
10. Ibid, p.41.
11. Ibid.

The Sikh tradition therefore, effects a kind of compromise. Guru Nanak is not viewed as an avtar, as it is indicated. Though he earned his salvation yet he had no living guru. This fact that God was Guru Nanak's Guru is supported by Guru Nanak himself when he says:

ਅਪਰੰਪਰ ਪਾਰਬ੍ਰਹਮ ਪਰਮੇਸੁਰ ਨਾਨਕ  
ਗੁਰੂ ਮਿਲਿਆ ਸੋਈ ਜੀਉ।<sup>12</sup>

But it may be pointed out that here God is identified with the sabad, as is evident from Nanak's reply to the Yogis that "the sabad is the Guru and mind attuned to it continually is the disciple."<sup>13</sup> Thus it was the sabad, the word of God which Nanak perceived and comprehended at the time of his enlightenment and it was the sabad, His transcendental Being which He **absorbed** in Nanak in order to be revealed.<sup>14</sup> This identification of God with the sabad is also underlined in the bani of Nanak when he says, "Thou art the Sabad and Thou art its expression",<sup>15</sup> and this identification is further elaborated and amplified by the third Guru that "the Sabad is Thine, Thou art of Thyself, why should we dwell in doubt."<sup>16</sup>

12. Adi Granth, Sorath, M. 1, p. 599.

13. ਸਬਦ ਗੁਰੂ ਸੁਰਤਿ ਧੁਨ ਚੇਲ।

Adi Granth, Ramkali, M.1, p.943.

14. ਗੁਰੂ ਮਹਿ ਆਪੇ ਸਮਝਿ ਸਬਦੁ ਵਰਤਾਇਆ।

Ibid., Var Malhar, M.1, p.1279.

15. ਆਪੇ ਸਬਦੁ ਆਪੇ ਨਿਸਾਨੁ। ਆਪੇ ਸੁਰਤਾ ਆਪੇ ਜਾਨੁ।

Ibid., Bilawal, M.1, p.795.

16. ਤੇਰਾ ਸੁਬਦ ਤੂੰ ਹੈ ਰਹਿ ਆਪੇ ਭਰਮੁ ਕਹਾਹੀ।

Ibid., Gauri, M.3, p.162.

Thus the ultimate form that guruship assumed in Sikhism, is that of the sabad,<sup>17</sup> and this is why McLeod observes that a strict definition requires us to identify the guru not with the God Himself but with the word (sabad) of God with the means whereby God imparts truth to man.<sup>18</sup> Therefore Bhai Gurdas identifies the sabad of the guru with the 'guru-murat', God's form or God Himself.<sup>19</sup>

In view of the above discussion, it may be surmised that the sabad is the guru or guru's form (guru roop) of the God, which was absorbed or infused into the mortal frame of Guru Nanak at the time of his enlightenment and which he transmitted from one Guru to another to be revealed in the human language known as bani or the gurbani. This fact is amply demonstrated by Guru Nanak and his successors as the bani which they uttered or composed was not of their own, and they had nothing to do with it; but their bani was divinely inspired and they uttered as God bid them to utter. It is, therefore, identified with the sabad of God, who is the guru of Nanak and his successors and, therefore, their

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17. Taran Singh, "The Nature of Guruship in the Guru Granth", The Nature of Guruship, ed. Clarence O. McMullen, op.cit., p.31.
  18. W.H. McLeod, Guru Nanak and the Sikh Religion (London: Oxford University Press, 1968), p. 199.
  19. Varan Bhai Gurdas, op.cit., Var 24, Pauri 25, p. 406.

bani which they composed and uttered is God-revealed or Prabhu bani.<sup>20</sup> The fact that "the continuity of the sabad is unbroken and there is one interpretation of the sabad, and the guru of the Gurus is one and their bani is One", is also underlined by Guru Amar Das.<sup>21</sup> Thus it is the continuity and absorption of the sabad jot which Nanak assumed at the time of his oneness with God of which the author of Dabistan-i-Mazahib mentions that Guru Nanak before his death "absorbed himself in Guru Angad who was his nearest servant (most devoted disciple) and Guru Angad is Nanak himself. After that, at the time of his death, Guru Angad entered into the body of Amardas in the above mentioned manner. He in the same manner occupied the place in the body of Ramdas, and Ramdas in the same way got united with Arjun Mal. They give every one the name of a Mahal; the first being Nanak, second Mahal Angad and so on till the fifth Mahal who is Arjun.

20. (i) ਤਾਂ ਮੈਂ ਕਹਿਆ ਕਰਣੁ ਜਾਂ ਤੁਝੋਂ ਕਹਾਇਆ।

Adi Granth, Wadhans, M.1, p.556.

(ii) ਵਾਹੁ ਵਾਹੁ ਬਾਣੀ ਨਿਰਕਾਰ ਹੈ। ਤਿਸ ਜੇਵਡੁ ਅਵਰ ਨਾ ਕੋਇ।

Ibid, Gujri, M.3, p. 515

(iii) ਸਤਿਗੁਰ ਕੀ ਬਾਣੀ ਸਤਿ ਸਤਿ ਕਰ ਜਾਣਹੁ ਗੁਰਸਿਖੇ ਹਰਿ ਕਰਤਾ ਆਪੁ ਮੁਹਹੁ

Ibid, Var Gauri, M.4, p.308.

ਕਛਾਇ।

(iv) ਧੁਰ ਕੀ ਬਾਣੀ ਆਈ। ਤਿਨ ਸਗਲੀ ਚਿਤ ਮਿਟਾਈ।

Ibid, Sorath, M.5, p.628.

21. ਏਕੋ ਗੁਰੂ ਏਕਾ ਬਾਣੀ ਏਕੋ ਸਬਦੁ ਵਿਚਾਰੁ।

Ibid, Sorath M.3, p.646.



They said who so ever does not acknowledge (or believe in) Arjun Mal to be very self of Baba Nanak becomes Manmukh or non-believer."<sup>22</sup> Similar view is expressed by the tenth Guru that all the Gurus were one, and without understanding this, one cannot be perfect. He says:

Nanak assumed the body of Angad and made his religion current in the world. Afterwards Nanak was called Amar Das. As one lamp is lit from another, the holy Nanak was revered as Angad. Angad was recognised as Amar Das, the pious said thus, but not the fools. Who thought them all distinct; But some rare person recognised that they were all one. They who understood thus obtained perfection without understanding this, perfection is not attained."<sup>23</sup>

It may be pointed out that here the basis of the oneness is the sabad which was absorbed in Nanak at the time of his oneness with God, and it was transmitted from Nanak to Angad because the latter had attuned his mind to the sabad with the close contact of Guru Nanak who was the embodiment of this jot, and became one with the sabad, the Guru in Nanak. Thus the metaphor 'lamp',<sup>24</sup> which has been used by the tenth

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- 22. Guru Nanak and Nanak Panthis, Extract translated in English from Dabistan-i-Mazahib published in Panjab Past and Present, Vol. III, 1969, pp. 49-50.
  - 23. Bachitar Natak, V. 7-10, c.f. Indubhushan Banerji, Evolution of Khalsa, 3rd edn. (1936 rpt. Calcutta: A. Mukherjee and Company Pvt. Ltd., 1972), Vol. I, p. 236.
  - 24. Bhai Gurdas and Satta and Balwand have also used the metaphor of 'light' to denote the transmission and absorption of Divine sabad from one Guru to another.

Guru indicates the transmission of the Divine sabad which was illuminated in Angad Dev by coming in close contact and by identification with Guru Nanak Dev, as one lamp is lit from another. In this manner, this Divine jot (sabad) was further communicated and absorbed in the other Sikh gurus. in order to be revealed in the human language for its communication to man for his self realization. J.S. Grewal also agrees ~~to~~ the view that the metaphor of light for the unity of guru-ship was used effectively.<sup>25</sup>

Thus it is evident that the Sikh gurus were one and the same, there was no change of spirit but a change of image. The installation ceremony of Guru Angad is very significant to denote this change. It is recorded in the Puratan Janam Sakhi that when Guru Nanak finally installed Lahina as his successor Guru Nanak put five paisa before Guru Angad and bowed down before him.<sup>26</sup> Similar account is given by Satta and Balwand in the Coronation Ode that Guru Nanak in bowing to Guru Angad reversed the order of the guru-shishya relationship.<sup>27</sup> Here it may be pointed out that it is neither reversal of the relationship nor the establishment of relationship of equality or oneness. This bowing ceremony has a symbolic significance that the soul illuminating bani or sabad jot was transferred to the most trusted and devoted

25. J.S. Grewal, "Guruship in Early Sikhism: An Historical Approach", The Nature of Guruship, op.cit., p.147.

26. Puratan Janam Sakhi, op.cit., p. 201.

27. Adi Granth, Var Satta & Balwand, p. 966.

disciple by bowing at the disciples feet. It is the transference of that sabad which elevates the disciple to the status of guru.<sup>28</sup> By this process the personality of the guru is detached from the spirit and the impersonal character of guruship is recognised. This is what has been recorded in 'Tikke-di-Var' or 'The Coronation Ode': "He (Angad) had the same light, the same way, the king merely changed his body."<sup>29</sup>

Another dimension of the institution of guruship in Sikhism was Nanak's decision to nominate a successor from amongst his disciples before his death in 1539 A.D. But for him, the Guru was the word of God or sabad jot within the human heart; for his followers and successors they see the Divine sanction behind Nanak's message and therefore, "this function was vested in Nanak himself who was qualified to instruct others by means of his exalted perception of the Divine Truth."<sup>30</sup> The uniqueness of Nanak, the Guru, had to be reconciled to the continuity of the 'word' under his successors and all this resulted in the idea of unity of guruship. Angad is simply Nanak the second, Amar Das is

28. ਤਿਤੁ ਮਹਿਨ ਜੋ ਸੁਬਦ ਹੋਆ, ਸੋ ਪੋਥੀ ਜੁਬਾਨ ਗੁਰੂ ਆਦ ਜੋ ਮਿਲੀ।

Puratan Janam Sakhi, op.cit., p.207.

29. Adi Granth, Var Satta & Balwand, p. 966.

30. W.H. McLeod, The Sikhs of the Punjab, (Auckland: Newzealand Graphic Educational Publications, 1968), p.15.

Nanak, the third<sup>31</sup> (and so on) and for this, the metaphor of light mingling with the light of Guru Nanak was used to denote this unity and continuity.<sup>32</sup>

This decision of continuity was very essential for the extension of Guru Nanak's mission as enjoined by the Divine Lord. But for this continuity "the disciples of Nanak would no doubt have disappeared, as well as, the disciples of many other Gurus before Nanak, if he had not taken care to appoint a successor before his death."<sup>33</sup> Gokul Chand Narang, commenting on the importance of the continuity of the institution of Gur-Gaddi observes, "Had Nanak died without a successor, there would have been no Sikhism today or at best another Kabirism."<sup>34</sup>

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31. J.S. Grewal, From Guru Nanak to Maharaja Ranjit Singh, Essays in Sikh History (Amritsar: Guru Nanak Dev University, 1972), p.40.
  32. M.A. Macauliffe, The Sikh Religion, Its Gurus, Sacred Writings and Authors, 2nd edn. (1909 rpt. Delhi: S. Chand and Company, 1978), Vol. II, pp. 26-27.
  33. Ernest Trumpp, The Adi Granth (London: W.M.H. Allen & Co., 1877), p. LXXVII.
  34. Gokul Chand Narang, Transformation of Sikhism, 5th edn. (rpt. New Delhi: New Book Society of India, 1960), p. 27 (f.n.); also see: Anil Chander Banerjee, Guru Nanak and His Times, Patiala: Punjabi University, p. 158.

From the above discussion, we may come to the conclusion that guru in Sikh philosophy is the bani or sabad which is abstract, impersonal and continuous, which is not subject to the limit of any space and time. But it may be noted that there is a change in the nature of succession of guruship after the fourth Guru, and according to Cust, "To Amar Dass succeeded his son-in-law Ram Dass, of Sodhi tribe of Khatri caste, in whose family the office of the Guru became hereditary till it finally ended in the person of Guru Govind Singh."<sup>35</sup> This hereditary principle of succession is also reflected in the writings of Bhai Gurdas. While commenting on the nomination of Guru Ram Das, he writes, "what previously received must be restored, and descend to the line that owneth it. The Sodhis will not allow it to depart; no others can endure the unendurable one. What belongeth to the house shall remain in the house."<sup>36</sup> Thus Guru Arjan succeeded Guru Ram Das because of being the son of Guru Ram Das and it was deviation from "the principle which conceptually speaking was against the very concept of Guru",<sup>37</sup> observes Dr. Niharanjan Ray. Though the choice was selective on the basis of merit and devotion yet Arjan Dev was blessed with the guruship as a consequence of

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35. Robert Needham Cust, Guru Nanak and the Indian Reformer, An extract from Pictures of Indian Life, published in Panjab Past & Present, Vol. III, 1969, p. 167.

36. Varan Bhai Gurdas, op.cit., Var 1, pauri 47, p.41.

37. Niharanjan Ray, The Sikh Gurus and the Sikh Society (Patiala: Punjabi University, 1970), p.98.

hereditary principle in supersession of his elder brother, Prithi Chand's claim. Being the eldest son of the fourth Guru Ram Das, Prithi Chand's position as the leader of the Sikh movement was fairly sound for he inherited the same sacred authority of his father though he was not installed as the Guru. He became a serious claimant to the gur gaddi of his father in view of the traditional Hindu law of succession. Aggrieved as he was, he created parallel Sikh centre and established gurudom of his own.<sup>38</sup> It posed a serious challenge to the established concept of guruship and there was serious threat of disintegration and schism in the Sikh movement. Prithi Chand in his bid to pose himself as the real Guru and strengthen his claim is said to have compiled a granth of the first four Gurus, and tried to wear away the followers from the main stream of Sikhism. In his attempt to claim gur gaddi and dethrone Arjan Dev, he formed a powerful splinter group known as the Minas<sup>39</sup> and joined hands with the court officials of the State against the Guru. According to Bansavalinama, some purohit brahamins (priests), Satta & Balvand, the court minstrels of Guru Arjan, Roopa Khidawa of Hargovind,

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38. Kesar Singh Chhiber, Bansavalinama Dassan Patshahian Ka, ed. Rattan Singh Jaggi, printed in Parkh, Research Bulletin of Punjabi Language and Literature, Chandigarh: Panjab University, 1972), Vol. p. 70.

39. The Minas were the decendants of Prithi Chand, the eldest son of Guru Ram Das who formed a powerful splinter group after being rejected to the succession of gur gaddi.

Kacha Dogra and others, who were excommunicated from the Guru's Darbar also joined this group.<sup>40</sup> This group according to J.S. Grewal was pro-establishment in its attitude towards the Guru and his movement.<sup>41</sup>

To avoid any disintegration and forge unity within the Sikh movement, it was considered very necessary by Arjan Dev to give a distinct and concrete form to the original concept of the institution of guruship i.e. bani or sabad is the guru. He collected and compiled the bani of the first four Gurus including his own and the bani of the bhaktas and the saints in one big volume "popularly known as the Adi Granth."<sup>42</sup> Its very name suggests that the Granth contained the bani of the Adi-Guru, the Supreme Lord, as revealed to the Sikh Gurus and the other bhaktas.<sup>43</sup> According to Prof. Puran Singh, this volume was first called by the name of 'Guru-da-Sabad' by Guru Arjan. Subsequently it was elevated to the high status of Guru as it was popularly called 'Sri Guru Granth' and installed in Harimandir. It became a sacred Granth of

40. Bansavalinama Dasan Patshahian Ka, op.cit., pp. 50-51.

41. J.S. Grewal, Paper Published on "Perspective on Early Sikh History" in Sikh Studies, Comparative Perspective on a Changing Tradition, edited by Mark Juergensmeyer and N. Gerald Barrier (Berkeley: Berkeley Religious Studies Series, 1979), p.37.

42. Bansavalinama Dasan Patshahian Ka, op.cit., p.215.

43. According to Bhai Vir Singh, the Vani which was composed by the Sikh Gurus, was the composition of the Gur-Jyoti which was lighted by the Supreme Lord in Guru Nanak and transformer to the other Gurus and the Bhagat-Vani which was recorded in the Adi Granth, was composed which revealed out of spiritual knowledge (Gyan) or Truth which was communicated to the Bhaktas by the same Gur-Jyoti. See: Gurpartap Suraj Granth, 4th ed. (1929 rpt. Amritsar: Khalsa Samachar, 1963), p. 2092 (f.n.)

the Gur.-Sikhs.<sup>44</sup> The installation ceremony of the Adi-Granth is very significant for understanding the status and the position which Guru Arjan assigned to the bani (Granth) at this occasion. According to Gur Bilas, Patshahi Chhevin and Gurpartap Suraj Granth, the Granth was taken in a procession to the central hall of the Temple and the ragis ahead the aswari sahib recited sabad kirtan. Baba Budha carried the Granth on his head and Guru Arjan waved the chaur (fly whisk) over it, throughout followed by the sangat including Prince Hargobind.<sup>45</sup> The Granth was placed in the Central Hall of Harimandir on a raised platform on a manji (cot) under the canopy.<sup>46</sup> Guru Arjan is stated to have a lower seat beside the Granth. The reverence and respect which was shown at the time of sukhasan of the Granth also speaks of the unique status in comparison to the corporeal guru. It is stated that the Granth was put to rest on a new cot and brand new bedding, at the resting place whereas Guru Arjan chose to sleep on the floor beside the Granth.<sup>47</sup>

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44. Puran Singh, Das Gur Darshan, trans. Kirpal Singh Kasel (Patiala: Punjabi University, 1972), p.64.

45. Sohan Kavi, Gur Bilas Patshahi Chhevin, ed. Inder Singh Gill (Amritsar: Jeevan Mandir Pustkalya, 1968), p. 93; Bhai Santokh Singh, op.cit., p. 2143.

46. Sant Rain Prem Singh, Gur Pur Prakash Granth (Amritsar: Gyani Press, 1919), Vol. II, p. 666.

47. Gurpartap Suraj Granth, op.cit., p. 2144; Gur Bilas Patshahi Chhevin, op.cit., p. 96.



Besides this, palki, canopy, chaur, singhasan, the emblems of royalty were used in the service of the Granth which speak of its sovereign character.

In view of this unique status and the stature which was assigned to the Granth by Guru Arjan, writes Ray, "One can perhaps imagine that he had at the back of his mind the idea of recognition of the Book itself as the Guru; he himself being the Guru Regent as it were."<sup>48</sup> Sher Singh is of the opinion that the status of the Guru was accorded to Adi-Granth by Guru Arjan at the time of its completion, though its formal recognition was accorded by the tenth Guru before his death in 1708.<sup>49</sup> But on the basis of respect and reverence which Guru Arjan showed for the Granth, observes Hari Singh, is indicative of the fact that the Guru (Arjan) assigned very high and unique status to the gurbani (sabad) than to the corporeal guru,<sup>50</sup> and the gurmat concept of recognition of the Granth as the spiritual Guru was not only accepted at the time of the death of Guru Gobind Singh but it was brought home to the Sikh sangats firmly quite earlier during the time of Guru Arjan itself,<sup>51</sup> in other

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48. Niharanjan Ray, op.cit., p. 98.

49. Dr. Sher Singh, Gurmat Darshan, (Amritsar: S.G.P.C., 1962), p.64.

50. Hari Singh, The Life Divine: Guru Arjan Dev, (Qadian: Sharda Punjabi Publishers, 1960), pp. 134-135.

51. Ibid.

words, "the recognition which the tenth guru gave the scripture made dejure what was in a sense already defacto ."52

There are ample references in Gurpartap Suraj Granth and Gur Bilas Patshahi Chhevin which suggest that the Granth was recognised as the spiritual or the real Guru of the Sikhs.53

It is thus evident that the Granth is not only stated to have been declared as the sargun roop of the Guru to the Sikhs. It was also declared to be the nirgun and sargun roop of the guru as it contains the word (sabad), the nirgun roop of the Supreme Lord:

ਨਿਤ ਕੀਜਹਿ ਗੁਰ ਸਬਦ ਬਿਚਾਰਾ ।  
ਵਾਹਿਗੁਰ ਕਰ ਗਯਾਨ ਪਛਾਨੇ।  
ਨਿਕਾਸੁਣ ਸਕਾਸੁਣ ਇਕ ਕਰ ਜਾਣੇ।54

52. W. Owen Cole & Piara Singh Sambhi, The Sikhs, Their Religious Practices, (New Delhi: Vikas Publishing House Pvt. Ltd., 1978), p. 50.

53. (i) ਸ੍ਰੀ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਗੁਰ ਕ੍ਰਿਸ਼ੋ ਕਾਰਨ ਕਰਨਿ ਕੇਰ ਕਲਾਨ।  
ਪਰਹਿ ਕਮਾਵਹਿ ਸੁਨਹਿ ਸੁਜਾਨ ॥37॥

Bhai Santokh Singh, op.cit., p. 2170.

(ii) ਗ੍ਰੰਥ ਰਿਦਾ ਗੁਰ ਕੇ ਇਹ ਜਾਨਹੁ, ਉਤਮ ਹੈ ਸਭ ਕਾਨ ਰਹੈ ਹੈ।  
ਮੇਰੇ ਸਰੂਪ ਤੇ ਯਾਤੇ ਹੈ ਦੀਰਘ, ਸਾਹਿਬ ਜਾਨ ਅਦਾਇਬ ਕੇ ਹੈ॥5॥

Ibid., Ras. 3, Ansu 50, p. 2140.

(iii) ਸ੍ਰੀ ਹਰਿਮਇਰ ਮੇ ਜਾਵਹੁ। ਜੁਥਾ ਸਕਤਿ ਤਹਿ ਭੇਟ ਚੁਵਾਵਹੁ ॥34॥  
ਹਾਥ ਜੋਰ ਕਰ ਸੀਸ ਨਵਾਵਹੁ। ਪ੍ਰਭ ਸਮਾਨ ਸਰਧਾ ਉਪਜਾਵਹੁ॥35॥

Ibid., p. 2135.

(iv) ਗੁਰੂ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ ਕਲਾਗੁ ਭਯੋ ਸ੍ਰੀ ਗੁਰੂ ਰੂਪ ਮਹਾਨ।

Gur Bilas Patshahi Chhevin, op.cit., p.90.

(v) ਪ੍ਰਾਤਕਾਨ ਚਨੀਏ ਦਰਬਾਰਾ ਅਸਥਾਪਨ ਗੁਰੂ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ ਅਵਤਾਰਾ।

Ibid., p. 92.

54. Bhai Santokh Singh, op.cit., p.2137.

It may also be pointed out that the use of his (Nanak's) own compositions for worship by Guru Nanak at Kartarpur dharamsala during the last fifteen years of his life speaks logically and historically the continuity of the thought and work of Guru Arjan Dev, which led to the process of compilation<sup>55</sup> and installation of the Granth in the Harimandir. Furthermore, observes J.S. Grewal, the 'word' (sabad) is equated by Guru Nanak himself with the Guru and thus the Granth becomes an alternative to the personal guruship of his successors.<sup>56</sup> From the internal evidence of the scripture it is clear that gurudom would be passed on<sup>to</sup> the scripture, which mirrors the concepts of sabad-guru. Reading of the scripture reveals that the guru is the central linchpin of the whole scripture, and the concept of guru is identical with that of Parmeshavara who is revealed through sacred scripture,<sup>57</sup> for the Granth is the abode of the Parmeshar (God).<sup>58</sup>

Thus, we may conclude that the institution of guruship as evolved went a long way in extending the mission and work

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55. J.S. Grewal, "Perspective on Early Sikh History", loc.cit., p.36.

56. From Guru Nanak to Maharaja Ranjit Singh, Essays on Sikh History, op.cit., p.40.

57. Nirbhai Singh, Bhagat Namdeva, (Patiala: Punjabi University, 1981), p.139.

58. ਪੋਥੀ ਪ੍ਰਮੇਸ਼ਵਰ ਕਾ ਬਾਣੀ.  
Adi Granth, Sarang, M.5, p. 1226.

of Guru Nanak. And it is during the tenure of Guru Arjan that the distinction between the personality of the Guru and the sabad of the Guru as recorded in the Adi-Granth became manifest. The Guru in person like Guru Nanak even though called the Guru, was essentially the dhadhi (minstrel) of his spiritual Guru, God. It was, thus, a great landmark as Guru Arjan provided to the Sikhs their spiritual guru in the form of Adi Granth or (the bani) which was beyond the scope of time and space in relation to the personal guru who could be available only during his life time at one place and at one time. Thus its impersonal, abstract and continuous character as evolved facilitated the Sikhs or Sikh sangats which were scattered at far off places to get a copy of the Adi Granth installed at their own place or at the local dharamsala and converge on it for their worship and socio-religious ceremonies without any difficulty of time and space. It thus went a long way in forging unity for it left no room for the emergence of personal (deh-dhari) gurus in the Sikh fold. Furthermore, this institution proved a nucleus around which other Sikh institutions - sangat, pangat, granth, gurdwara and masand - sprang, as will be evident from the origin and development of these institutions.

Broadly speaking, it was Guru Arjan who had separated the personality of the Guru from the spirit. For all intents

and purposes, the Adi Granth became the defacto spiritual guru of the Sikhs, therefore, series of socio-religious practices were evolved around the nucleus of the Granth and the Granth darbar and not around the person of the Guru. The corporeal Guru seems to work as the Guru Regent of God as is evident from the status and position assigned to the Granth. The Granth appears to him as the sovereign Lord and Guru Arjan was seen some times fanning the chaur over it, bowing and offering ardas or paying shukrana time and again. The function such as of giving charnamrit and gur-dikhia which he administered, be viewed as a part of his status "being the Guru Regent"<sup>59</sup> like Guru Nanak who spent his life in spreading the Truth and the Glory of God as assigned by Him, his Guru.

#### Adi Granth:

The title 'Adi Granth' consists of two words, 'Adi' which means first or original; and the 'Granth' which is derived from the Sanskrit, implies like 'Koran' and 'Bible', a book, more appropriately the Book Par-Excellence. Its spiritual poetry offers a vision of the cosmic order and exhortation to higher life. A unique scripture among the source books of religion, it consists solely of the meditation of God-inspired-men who have communicated the Divine word in a spirit of deep

59. I believe the view of Niharanjan Ray about the concept of guru is more nearer truth. For detail see: The Sikh Gurus and the Sikh Society, op.cit., p.98.

humility and compassion for mankind.<sup>60</sup> Called variously as Sri Adi Granth (primal Granth), Granth Sahib (The holy Granth) and Guru Granth Sahib, it is not looked upon by its followers merely as a book or a scripture, but as mentioned earlier, an embodiment of the visible form of the essence of primal Guru (God) being repository of the Divine word.<sup>61</sup> In view of this nature of the Adi-Granth it is offered worship as is done to a Guru and is not treated as an object of mere veneration. And wherever the holy Granth is kept in state, with an attendant waving the fly whisk (chaur) over it, recitation and kirtan (holy music) and other due ceremonies performed as prescribed by Arjan Dev, that spot becomes for the occasion a gurdwara (Guru's portal a Sikh temple).<sup>62</sup> In the Sikh temple the Granth Sahib is kept; it is brought in state; prayers are offered in its presence; and at night time is taken to the duly appointed place for retirement. It is thus treated as a sacred person, the Guru rather than merely a book.<sup>63</sup> Therefore, the compilation of the Adi Granth, was the crowning achievement

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60. Sri Guru Granth Sahib, English translation by Gurbachan Singh Talib (Patiala: Punjabi University, 1984), Vol. 1, p. xxi (introduction).

61. ਪ੍ਰੋਥੀ ਪ੍ਰਮੇਸ਼ਵਰ ਕਾ ਬਾਣੁ ।  
Adi Granth, Sarang, M.5, p. 1226

62. Sri Guru Granth Sahib, Vol. I, op.cit., p.4.

63. Ibid, p. XXII.

of Guru Arjan Dev as it became the nucleus around which the institutional framework of the Sikh movement was structured.

From the preceding account it is evident that the compilation of the Adi-Granth was in accordance with the spiritual tenets of Sikhism and was the natural outcome of the events. Nevertheless, a brief mention may be made in the following pages of some of the factors which necessitated its compilation.

According to G.C. Narang, the main motive behind the compilation of the Granth was to provide a sacred Granth to his Sikhs because "the only book of their sect which the Sikhs had to that time was a biography of Guru Nanak . . . . As soon as Arjun ascended the gaddi, he felt the need of placing some sort of Bible in the hands of his followers and turned his attention, first of all, to supply this desideratum."<sup>64</sup> S.M. Latif observes that the motive of Guru Arjan behind the compilation of the Adi-Granth was "that he attempted to raise the followers of Nanak in the scale of society, and, with a view to uniting them by one common religious tie, he gave them a code, which they held in greatest veneration."<sup>65</sup> But it is believed by H.R. Gupta that Arjan Dev desired to raise the status of Sikhism from

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64. Gokul Chand Narang, op.cit., p.40.

65. S.M. Latif, History of the Punjab (Calcutta: Central Press Ltd., 1891; rpt. 1964), p. 253.

a sect to a religion and this object could be fulfilled by providing the Sikhs their own holy scripture like the Vedas, the Bible and the Quran.<sup>66</sup>

It is also held that Guru Amar Das, the third Guru of the Sikhs had exhorted the Sikhs that the 'sachi bani', the real hymns of the True Lord should be recited and revered,<sup>67</sup> and in view of this directive, an authoritative compilation of the hymns of the successive Gurus had become a matter of vital necessity<sup>68</sup> for the guidance of the adherents to meet their religious need. In the words of Macauliffe, "Guru Arjan now felt the necessity of laying down rules for their religious duties and expiatory rites."<sup>69</sup> This, of course, would not only bring consistency to the Sikh religious thought but also check the expected emergence of divergence in tenets and rituals. This consummation, however, could be attained when the exact words of the Gurus were permanently recorded in one great volume.<sup>70</sup>

Reiterating what has been mentioned above, the challenge posed by Prithi Chand who had himself compiled a granth and

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66. H.R. Gupta, History of the Sikh Gurus, (New Delhi: U.C. Kapoor and Sons, 1973), p.94.

67. Adi Granth, Ramkali, M.3, p.920.

68. Indubhushan Banerjee, Evolution of Khalsa, 3rd edn. (1936 rpt. Calcutta: A. Mukherjee and Co. Pvt.Ltd., 1972), Vol. I, p.205.

69. M.A. Macauliffe, op.cit., p.55.

70. Ibid.



was causing a threat of schism, it may logically be accepted that Guru Arjan resolved to collect the authentic bani of his predecessors and prepare an anthology of the sacred writings for the use by the Sikhs.<sup>71</sup> But McLeod views the above tradition differently and presumes that the Minas, the enemies of Guru Arjan Dev, were circulating spurious works bearing the name of Nanak in order to reduce the Sikhs from their loyalty to the legitimate succession. In order to combat this threat to his authority Guru Arjan decided to prepare an authentic text of the bani.<sup>72</sup>

With the compilation of the bani of the Gurus and the bhaktas, the object of the apprehension of the sacred, or the experiences of the holy, as well as the kinds of attitude involved of the adherents could be given some concrete form of the objectified experiences which could be communicated to others and transmitted from one generation to the succeeding one.<sup>73</sup> But if they were left to the memory, these, in course of time, would get corrupted and vanish. So, the collection and compilation of the bani was considered necessary in the interest and permanent survival of Sikhism.

But the opinions expressed above do not seem to have viewed the compilation of the Adi-Granth in the perspective of

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71. Madanjit Kaur, The Golden Temple Past & Present (Amritsar: Guru Nanak Dev University, 1983), p.15.
  72. W.H. McLeod, The Evolution of Sikh Community (London: Oxford Press, 1975), p.60.
  73. Thomas F. O' Dea, "Sociological Dilemmas: Five Paradoxes of Institutionalisation", Man's Religious Quest, ed. Whitefield Foy, (London: Open University Press, 1978), p. 303.

historico-social phenomenon. From the point of view of this perspective, it has been studied that Guru Arjan's pontification had entered the developmental stage of Sikh movement which posed problems with regard to the situation in terms of institutional development. The foremost among them was the Guru's relation with the adherents. Since the followers of the Guru were scattered over vast area,<sup>74</sup> and as such there was an apprehension of their loosening of the ties with the sacred authority, for the corporeal Sikh Guru could not be present at all these places at one and the same time to cater<sup>to</sup> their secular and spiritual needs. Therefore, one such symbolic institution which could transcend the limits of time and space was conceived in the symbol of Adi-Granth for the family or group ceremonies, for the reinforcement of group solidarity, for the expansion of the group and strengthening of relationship with the nucleus of the Guru. Moreover, the need for stable institutional framework increased corresponding to the increase in number<sup>75</sup> of the followers during the time of Guru Arjan which included among them the persons of weaker and unstable will and whose management and mobilization necessitated greater institutionalization.

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74. According to Varan Bhai Gurdas, the Sikh Sangats had grown up at distance places like Kabul, Sirhind, Sultanpur, Lahore, Kashmir, Thanesar, Delhi, Fatehpur, Agra, etc. (Var 11, pauris 24-27, pp. 211-14).

75. Guru Nanak and Nanak Panthis, op.cit., p.35.

Moreover, at this stage, there was a genuine apprehension that Sikhism, like the other religions before it, would be fragmented into warring sects, as there is always a tendency, due to the absence of standardised message particularly at a juncture when dissenters like Prithi Chand had got a Granth prepared with the incorporation of his own in the name of Nanak. Such a development could also reduce the attraction of the real Guru. Under these circumstances, Guru would have failed to satisfy the complex needs of the followers particularly the psychological ones. To check disintegration and to maintain the purity and attraction of the contents of the message of the Gurus, Arjan Dev perceived the necessity of raising a stable institutional matrix capable of eliciting obedience to the nucleus i.e. the Guru himself or a comparable institution as the Adi Granth or the two together.

It was this social phenomenon and historical need that Guru Arjan Dev, in the opinion of Giani Gian Singh, had realized that, "Religion and Nations spread and prosper on the basis of their own Granth... For the permanent existence of the Sikh nation, he thought of compilation of sacred Granth of the bani of the True Lord."<sup>76</sup> Moreover, it was a very essential part of the social phenomenon of the medieval age to have a sacred scripture of their own for the sake of

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76. Bhai Gian Singh Ji Giani, Twarikh Guru Khalsa, 2nd edn. (1919 rpt. Patiala: Bhasha Vibhag, 1970), Vol.I, p.393.

group unity in a given society and raise its status from a sect to a religion. The pontification of Guru Arjan Dev was thus a 'significant stage'<sup>77</sup> in the development of Sikhism. At the end of this historic stage, it became absolutely necessary to standardize the message and raise the structure of ecclesiastical institution for the routinization of the group. This contention is supported by J.S. Grewal when he says that it developed logically and historically into the compilation of the Granth by Guru Arjan Dev in 1604 A.D.<sup>78</sup>

In view of the historical necessity, as explained above, Guru Arjan resolved to compile the sacred volume, and therefore decided upon collecting the bani (text of compositions) of his predecessors from wherever these could be available. According to the author of Twarikh Guru Khalsa, the Guru is said to have sent hukamnamas to the Sikhs to bring the bani or sabad of the Gurus if any, with them to him. Consequently, responding to his call, the Sikhs got recorded to the Guru any such bani or sabad which they had with them or remembered by heart. In this manner, a bulk of the bani

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77. According to Ernst Troeltsch, at the end of original charismatic period, a necessity arises to standardize the Message and raise the structure of ecclesiastical institution for the routinization of the sect that denominates with a religious order. Ernst Troeltsch, The Social Teachings of the Christian Churches, Olive Wyon, trans. (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1931), Vol. III, p. 999-1000.

78. J.S. Grewal, "A Perspective on Early Sikh History", edited by Mark Juergensmeyer and N. Gerald Barrier, (Berkeley: Berkeley Religious Studies Series, Graduate Theological Union, 1979), op.cit., p. 436.

was collected by the Guru.<sup>79</sup> It is presumed by Prof. Talib that Guru Arjan sent out some of his persons to far off places in the country to collect the authentic text of the compositions of such of the saints (bhaktas) as had preached worship of the sole unattributed formless Supreme Being (Ek Oankar, Nirguna, Nirankar, Braham), who, moreover, had exhorted the people to rise above the caste barriers and to still sectarian strife.<sup>80</sup> According to the author of Gurpartap Suraj Granth some contemporary bhaktas and sufis like Kahna, Shah Hussain, Pilo and Chhajju, to name a few, approached Guru Arjan requesting him to include their compositions in the proposed sacred volume but it is believed that the request was not acceded to, because their compositions were found lacking in universal vision, humility and deep humanitarianism that were the characteristics of the Guru's teachings.<sup>81</sup> The Guru is also said to have sent one disciple named Paira Mokha, to Ceylon (Modern Sri Lanka) to fetch Pran Sangli, a Yogic text, which, it is believed, Guru Nanak had composed during his visit to that place. This was brought and on its examination, it was found spurious. It centred round hatha yoga, the system which has been repudiated in the Gurbani as it is contrary to its spirit.<sup>82</sup>

79. Bhai Gian Singh Ji Giani, op.cit., p.393.

80. Sri Guru Granth Sahib, op.cit., p. XXVIII

81. Bhai Santokh Singh, op.cit., pp. 2110, 2113, 2116, 2117.

82. Ibid., pp. 2039, 2043, 2044.

But the greatest task before Guru Arjan was to procure the two pothis of the bani from Guru Amar Das's eldest son, Baba Mohan, a maternal uncle of Guru Arjan Dev, which were compiled during Guru Amar Das's time. Failing in his attempt to procure these pothis from Baba Mohan through his messengers, Guru Arjan went personally to Goindwal for the procurement of these volumes but Baba Mohan is stated to have shut himself up in an upper chamber (chobara) of his house. Being a man of mystical bent of mind, and determined not to part with the pothis, as the tradition goes, he refused to meet the Guru. Consequently, Guru Arjan is stated to have started singing a hymn in the praise of Mohan<sup>83</sup> below the window of the room where Baba Mohan had shut himself to the accompaniment of Sarinda, to move him to part with the pothis.<sup>84</sup> But it may be pointed out that the hymn has a beautiful ambiguity about it, employing one of the attributive names of God, Mohan to sing Divine laudation. **Anyway**, it is said that Mohan's heart melted at the sweet humility of Guru Arjan Dev; he came down, made obeisance to his nephew, and handed over the pothis.<sup>85</sup> The pothis were brought to Amritsar with great reverence in a palki and Guru Arjan walking behind barefooted.<sup>86</sup> These

83. ਮੋਹਨ ਤੇਰੇ ਉਚੇ ਮੇਰ ਮਹਨ ਘੁਰਾ ॥੧੧੧॥

Adi Granth, Gauri, M.5, Chhant, p.248.

84. Bhai Santokh Singh, op.cit., pp. 2050-51.

85. *Ibid.*, p. 2054.

86. Gur Bilas Patshahi Chhevin, op.cit., p.60.

pothis are said to have scribed by Baba Sahas Ram, son of Mohan and grandson of Guru Amar Das. These volumes consist of 300 and 224 leaves respectively, making a total of 1048 pages, all written in one hand, except two hymns, persumably in Ram Das's hand prior to assumption of Guruship. Some pages were left-blank. On page 94 of the volume II is written, "Ghulam Mastan Jeth Chand", Jeth Chand being Guru Ram Das's original name. So this is in the authentic hand of Guru Ram Das.<sup>87</sup> Dr. Talib points out that these pothis contain bani in 15 ragas out of 30 that found place in the Adi-Granth as finalized by Guru Arjan Dev in 1604. The 31st raga, Jaijawanti was the mould of some hymns of Guru Teg Bahadur, and was added when under the command of Guru Gobind Singh the volume, as it stands now, was completed. Moreover, in these pothis the order of the ragas and of the hymns of the Gurus is not the same as in the extant canon of Guru Granth Sahib. In volume one of the pothis the following eleven ragas are included: Suhi, Prabhati, Dhanasri, Basant, Telang, Gujri, Bilawal, Bhairon, Maru and Kidara. In volume II, four ragas appear: Ramkali, Sorath, Malar and Sarang. Thus a total of 15 ragas appear in these two pothis. To these, however, additions were made when the scripture was finalized.<sup>88</sup> It may also be added

87. Sri Guru Granth Sahib, Vol. I, op.cit., p. XXIV.

88. Ibid., p. XXIV.

that some additions were made in the pre-existing banis, when final form was given to the holy Granth by Guru Arjan Dev e.g. in these pothis, Anandu (Anand) contains 38 pauris and Siddha-Goshti contains 72 pauris. Besides these, Vars and much other bani was added.<sup>89</sup> These pothis also include the bani of several bhaktas - Kabir, Namdev, Ravidas, Bhikan, Trilochan, Sain, Ramanand and Farid. Rahau or pause is given frequently at appropriate places. Mahalla or the name of the Guru is also mentioned only once each time at the end of a group of hymns. Numbering of hymns has been done.<sup>90</sup> Talib also points out that revision and additions in other respects too were made when the final scripture came to be completed. The Japu (Japuji) was added to the final scripture. The form to the banis Rahiras and Kirtan Sohila, standing after Japu (Japuji) in the holy Granth Sahib was also given when the scripture acquired final shape.<sup>91</sup> According to McLeod, the Goindwal volumes can thus be regarded as the first recension of the Adi Granth,<sup>92</sup> and Guru Arjan's principal source for the compilation of Adi Granth.<sup>93</sup>

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89. Ibid., p. XXIV.

90. Ibid., p. XXV.

91. Ibid.,

92. W.H. McLeod, op.cit., p.61.

93. Ibid., p.60.



According to Twarikh Guru Khalsa, Bakhta Arora, a Sikh of the Hassan Abdal area also presented Guru Arjan Dev a large volume containing the bani of the predecessor Gurus.<sup>94</sup> This volume, observes Dr. Talib, may have been one of the sources of the holy volume<sup>95</sup> and was extant with his descendants, Buta Singh at Rawalpindi.<sup>96</sup>

Contrary to the above mentioned tradition Sahib Singh who has made a detailed study in his famous work 'Adi Bir Bare', is of the opinion that Guru Nanak handed over his entire bani alongwith the bani of bhaktas to his successor Guru Angad and this tradition was continued by the subsequent Gurus till the bani of the predecessor four Gurus and the bhaktas passed into the hands of Guru Arjan.<sup>97</sup> In support of his contention Sahib Singh has offered the following arguments:

- (i) It is explicitly mentioned in the Puratan Janam Sakhi that Guru Nanak handed over the pothi of the entire bani to Guru Angad at the time of his death.<sup>98</sup>
- (ii) The fact that Guru Angad had the bani of his predecessor Guru is proved beyond doubt that many of his own compositions have direct bearing of the bani of Guru

94. Bhai Gian Singh Ji Giani, op.cit., p. 393.

95. Sri Guru Granth Sahib, Vol. I, op.cit., p. XXV.

96. Bhai Gian Singh Ji Giani, op.cit., p. 393.

97. Dr. Sahib Singh, Adi Bir Bare, (Amritsar: Singh Brothers, Mai Hiran Gate, 1970), p. 108.

98. Puratan Janam Sakhi, op.cit., p. 207.

Nanak, and echo the very expression of the latter.<sup>99</sup>

- (iii) Similarly Guru Amar Das had the bani of Guru Nanak with him when he wrote his own hymns is proved by several facts.<sup>100</sup>
- (iv) Guru Amar Das got inspiration from this bani and composed his own which along with the bani of his predecessors was handed over to his successor Ram Das, for there is deep resemblance in thought and expression of the bani of Guru Ram Das with that of

99. For example see the sloks of Guru Angad attached to Guru Nanak's 22nd pauri in Asa di Var; also compare to the sloks of 17th pauri of Var Majh and and some other sloks of Guru Angad. (For detail see: Dr. Sahib Singh, Adi Bir Bare, pp. 40-45.

100. (a) Guru Amar Das used the same musical measures (17 out of 19) as were used by Guru Nanak and no new musical measure was used by him;
- (b) Amar Das wrote an acrostic of the same kind called patti in the same measure called Asa as was written by Nanak;
- (c) His elegiac verses, called Alahania, corresponds to the elegiac piece of the same name and in the same measure (wadhans) in Guru Nanak;
- (d) His Sohle verse in Maru corresponds to Sohle of Guru Nanak, in the same measure;
- (e) Sloks of Guru Nanak inspired Amar Das to write his own Sloks;
- (f) There are other verses of Amar Das which are indicative that he had gone through the bani of Guru Nanak before writing his own.

Sahib Singh, Adi Bir Bare, (Amritsar: Singh Brothers, 1970), op.cit., pp. 46, 77, 80 and 81.

his predecessors. In the same tradition, the bani was inherited by the fifth Guru Arjan Dev from his predecessor Guru Ram Das.<sup>101</sup>

In agreement with the view of Sahib Singh, Talib writes that when Nanak quitted this mortal world (1539 A.D.), he left to his successor in the holy office of guruship, Guru Angad Dev, a pothi (sacred volume of his inspired compositions) as the most precious legacy. Guru Angad whose period of guruship lasted from 1539-1552 A.D. added some compositions of his own. He was mainly amplyfing the deeper meanings and the significance of the teachings of the Master. His successor, the aged Amar Das (1552-74 A.D.), with the fervour of inspired devotion, added a large volume of sacred poetry (bani) to what he inherited from Guru Nanak Dev and Guru Angad Dev, and gave expression to the deep devotion, philosophy and higher moral vision. In his life time, he collected the entire body of the sacred verse of his own compositions and of his predecessors alongwith the compositions of the bhaktas or saint poets of India whose teachings accorded in principle with those of Sikhism. The entire body of sacred verse was recorded in two volumes or pothis which are still extant, with the decendants of the Guru. These became, when some years later the Granth came to be compiled, the matrix for

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101. Dr. Sahib Singh, op.cit., p.81.

the sacred volume.<sup>102</sup> Talib points out the tradition of inheritance when he mentions that "Guru Ram Das composed a fairly large number of hymns, rich with devotional fervour and this body of verse too got added to the tradition of Sikh sacred literature."<sup>103</sup> Guru Arjan Dev succeeded Ram Das in 1581 A.D. who composed a large volume of sacred verses, enunciating the teachings of his predecessors, elucidating and amplifying them. This may be seen particularly in several vars or long disquisitional compositions which form part of the sacred volume of the Granth Sahib.<sup>104</sup> This is indicative of the fact that Guru Arjan had with him the bani of his predecessors which he had inherited at the time of his pontification as spiritual property.

We may suggest that the bani of the predecessor Gurus and the bhaktas and saints which each Guru composed and collected was inherited from one Guru to another till that passed into the hands of fifth Guru Arjan Dev. But Guru Arjan Dev in his bid to be doubly sure lest some bani of the predecessor Gurus and the identical bani of the bhaktas should escape from the compilation, made a second bid of collecting the bani as indicated by the Sikh chroniclers.

102. Sri Guru Granth Sahib, op.cit., p. XXIV.

103. Ibid., p. XXV.

104. Ibid., p. XXVI.

Having thus ensured himself of the collection work, he chose a solitary and a peaceful picturesque place for the compilation of the sacred Granth,<sup>105</sup> where Gurdwara Ram-Sar stands now on Tarn Taran Road. The Guru took up his abode there and dictated the hymns to Bhai Gurdas.<sup>106</sup> According to the author of Sri Gurpartap Suraj Granth and Gur Bilas Patshahi Chhevin, the compilation work of the Adi Granth was completed on Bhadon Sudi Ekam Samvat 1661 BK. i.e. 1604 A.D.<sup>107</sup> But according to Sahib Singh the compilation work of the original text of the Granth was completed on Bhadon Wadi Ekam Samvat 1661 BK. when he took in hand the work of writing the table of contents (tatkra) of the said Granth as recorded by Bhai Gurdas at the start of the 'tatkra', in the original Kartarpur Wali Bir which is available with the descendants of Dhirmal,<sup>108</sup> and the date Bhadon Sudi Ekam

105. According to Bhai Santokh Singh, Guru Arjan alongwith Bhai Gurdas repaired more than a mile toward east from Sudhsar (Amritsar) and chose a picturesque solitary place under the thick cluster of trees. (Gurpartap Suraj Granth, p. 2077).

106. H.R. Gupta, op.cit., p. 96.

107. (i) ਸੰਮਤ ਸੋਲਹਿ ਸੈ ਇਕ ਸਾਠਹਿ। ਭਾਦਵ ਕੀ ਸੁਦੀ ਏਕਮ ਜਠੈ।  
ਗ੍ਰੰਥ ਸਮਾਪਤਿ ਸ੍ਰੀ ਗੁਰ ਕੀਨਿ; ਮਹਾਂ ਉਤਸਾਹ ਗੁਰੂ ਘਰ ਠਠੈ।

Bhai Santokh Singh, op.cit., p. 2140.

(ii) ਗੁਰਦਾਸ ਬੜੇ ਪਰ ਦਸਖਤ ਰਹੇ। ਸੰਮਤ ਲਿਖਯੋ ਆਰ ਸੁਖਭਰੇ।  
ਸੰਮਤ ਸੋਲਾਂ ਸੈ ਸੁਖ ਰਾਗੀ। ਇਕ ਸਠ ਤਾਂਏ ਉਪਰ ਧਾਗੀ।  
ਭਾਦੋਂ ਸੁਦੀ ਏਕਮ ਸੁਖਦਾਈ। ਸ੍ਰੀ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ ਭਯੋ ਪੂਰ ਸੁਹਾਈ।

Gur Bilas Patshahi Chhevin, op.cit., p.90.

108. ਸੂਚੀ ਪੜ੍ਹ ਪੋਥੀ ਰਾ, ਤਤਰਕਾ ਰਾਗਾਂ ਰਾ, ਸੰਮਤ 1661 ਮਿਤੀ  
ਭਾਦਵ ਵਦੀ ਏਕਮ ੧ ਪੋਥੀ ਲਿਖਿ ਪਹੁਚੇ।

Sahib Singh, Adi Bir Bare, op.cit., p.121.

which comes after two weeks as indicated by Gurpartap Suraj Granth and Gur Bilas Patshahi Chhevin denotes the date on which the Granth (Bir) was completed in all respects including the table of contents (tatkara) and its binding work etc. and Guru Arjan was able to install it in the Harimandir Sahib.<sup>109</sup>

As to the format and arrangement of the Adi-Granth, Guru Arjan did cast the whole bani, except Japu (Japuji), placing at the head of the sacred volume, into ragas or musical measures.<sup>110</sup> Japu or Japuji is followed by Sodar, Sopurakhu which is commonly known as Rahiras, recited in the evening and Sohila which is recited at night before retiring to bed. Though Sodar, Sopurakhu and Sohila are not set under the scheme of musical ragas but set in musical measure of Rag Asa, Gujri and Gauri-Dipki respectively for laudation.<sup>111</sup> This bani which now covers pages 1-13 of standard edition of Guru Granth Sahib being used for daily meditation seems to have been placed in the very opening of the Granth for the convenience of the followers for nitname (Daily code of conduct). The whole bani following page 13 i.e. from 14 to 1353 was set under the musical ragas starting with Sri raga

109. Sahib Singh, op.cit., p. 122.

110. Sri Guru Granth Sahib, op.cit., p. XXVIII

111. Ibid., p. VII

and ending with Jaijawanti. There are thirty one of these now<sup>112</sup> including Jaijawanti which was added subsequently alongwith the hymns of Guru Teg Bahadur by Guru Gobind Singh. Guru Arjan seems to have avoided the extreme ragas which are calculated to work the mind to extreme of joy or sorrow; e.g. Megh and Hindol, Jog and Deepak.<sup>113</sup> As to the arrangement of the bani adopted under the division of 31

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|------------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| 112. 1) Sri Rag                    | 2) Majh                          |
| 3) Gauri                           | 4) Asa                           |
| 5) Gujri                           | 6) Devgandhari                   |
| 7) Bihagra                         | 8) Wadhans                       |
| 9) Sorath                          | 10) Dhanasri                     |
| 11) Jaitsri                        | 12) Todi                         |
| 13) Bairari                        | 14) Tilang                       |
| 15) Suhi                           | 16) Bilawal                      |
| 17) Gaund and one variant Bilawal  | 18) Ram Kali, and variant Dakhni |
| 19) Natnarain                      | 20) Mali Gaura                   |
| 21) Maru                           | 22) Tukhari                      |
| 23) Kedara                         | 24) Bhairo                       |
| 25) Basant; and one variant Hindol | 26) Sarang                       |
| 27) Malhar                         | 28) Kanra                        |
| 29) Kalyan and variant Bhupali     | 30) Prabhati and variant Bibhas  |
| 31) Jaijawanti                     |                                  |

113. Teja Singh and Ganda Singh, A Short History of the Sikhs, (Calcutta: Oriental Longmans Ltd., 1950) Vol. I, p. 32.

raga scheme, Talib points out that since all the Gurus took the title of 'Nanak' on coming to the holy Ministry, to distinguish the correct authorship, a convention was devised whereby each of the Guru was designated as Mahalla or Mahla, that is, Tenement of God, numbered according to his succession to Guru Nanak Dev who is designated as Mahalla I. The hymns are arranged in accordance with the order of the Gurus in the Sikh tradition. Thus Guru Nanak comes first in each measure and genre, followed by Guru Amar Das, Ram Das and Arjan Dev in that order;<sup>114</sup> then follow the bani of those saints, beginning with those of Kabir and ending with those of Farid.<sup>115</sup> But Guru Angad had written only 62 or 63 slokas which were adjusted and scattered in ten vars of the Gurus.<sup>116</sup>

It may also be pointed out that under each raga are chaupadas (quatrains), ashtpadis (octets), chhants (lyric) and vars (long disquisitional compositions). Besides, all these genres are compositions cast in special moulds according to the principles of Indian poetics, such as Pahre (hours of the day and night), Thirteen (Lunar dates), Sat Var (days of the week), Bara Maha (the twelve months or seasons), Bawan Akhri (acrostics built on the fifty two

114. Sri Guru Granth Sahib, op.cit., p. XVII.

115. Dr. Teja Singh & Ganda Singh, op.cit., p.32.

116. W. Owen Cole and Piara Singh Sambhi, op.cit., p.191.



letters of Sanskrit alphabet) and others. Patti is built round the Gurmukhi alphabet. There are<sup>a</sup> few compositions with special titles, such as Guru Arjan's Sukhmani in Gauri; Guru Nanak's Siddh-Goshti and Onkar; both in Ramkali.<sup>117</sup>

In the entire scheme of arrangement mentioned above, are contained 974 hymns of Guru Nanak, 62 of Guru Angad, 907 of Guru Amar Das, 679 of Ram Das, 2218 of Guru Arjan,<sup>118</sup> and 116 hymns of Guru Teg Bahadur<sup>119</sup> which were added subsequently by Gobind Singh. The number of bhaktas and the saints whose bani was included in the Adi Granth is 15, and their detail is given as under:<sup>120</sup>

	<u>Name</u>	<u>Caste</u>	<u>Province</u>	<u>Total Sabad</u>
1.	Kabir	Julaha	U.P.	541
2.	Namdev	Chhinba	Maharashtar	60
3.	Ravidas	Chamar	U.P.	41
4.	Farid	Musalman	Punjab	134
5.	Trilochan	Brahman	Maharashtar	4
6.	Beni	Brahman	Bihar	3

117. Sri Guru Granth Sahib, op.cit., p. XXVII-XXIX.

118. Piara Singh Padam, "Sri Guru Granth Sahib", Guru Arjan Vishesh Ank, Punjabi Dunia, (Patiala: Bhasha Vibhag, June-July, 1953), p.109; Gobind Singh Mansukhani, The Quintessence of Sikhism, 3rd edn. (1959 rpt. Amritsar: Shiromani Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee, 1985), p.259; H.R. Gupta, op.cit., p.96.

119. According to Dr. Sahib Singh, it includes 59 sabad and 57 sloks. See: Adi Bir Bare, op.cit., pp.149-150.

120. Guru Arjan Vishesh Ank, op.cit., p.110.

	<u>Name</u>	<u>Caste</u>	<u>Province</u>	<u>Total Sabad</u>
7.	Dhanna	Jat	Rajputana	4
8.	Jaidev	Brahman	Bengal	2
9.	Bhikhan	Musalman	U.P.	2
10.	Sen or Sain	Nai	C.P.	1
11.	Pipa	Brahman	Guzarat	1
12.	Sadna	Kasaee (butcher)	Sind	1
13.	Ramanand	-	Madras	1
14.	Parmanand	Brahman	Maharashtar	1
15.	Surdas	Brahman	Oudh	2

Besides these bhaktas, it also includes the bani of the following 15 bhatts and minstrels.<sup>121</sup>

	<u>Name</u>	<u>Caste</u>	<u>Province</u>	<u>Total Sabad</u>
1.	Sunder	Khatri	Punjab	6
2.	Mardana	Mirasi	Punjab	3
3.	Satta	Doom	"	3
4.	Rai Balwand	Rai Bhatt	"	5
5.	Kalosahor	"	"	54
6.	Jalp	"	"	5
7.	Kirat	"	"	8
8.	Sal	"	"	3
9.	Bhal	"	"	1
10.	Nal	"	"	16
11.	Bhikha	"	"	2
12.	Gond	"	"	13
13.	Bal	"	"	5
14.	Harbans	"	"	2
15.	Mathura	"	"	4

121. Ibid., p. 110.

After the classification of the bani under the raga scheme which ends on page 1353 of the standard edition of the Granth, the remaining bani which could not be adjusted in that scheme was arranged in the Adi Granth, in the following order on the basis of poetic form:

1.     Slok Sahskriti, M.1
2.     Slok Sahskriti, M.5
3.     Gatha, M.5
4.     **Funhe** M.5
5.     Chaubole M.5
6.     Slok Bhagat Kabir
7.     Slok Shaikh Farid
8.     Swayyas of M.5
9.     Swayyas of the Bhatta (M 1 to M.5)
10.    Slok of the Gurus (M.1 to M. 5)
11.    Slok M. 9\*
12.    Mundawani M.5\*\*
13.    Rag Mala\*\*\*

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\*     These were added subsequently at the time of inclusion of the bani by Guru Gobind Singh

\*\*    Mundawani means 'the puzzle or the seal' to mark the close of the book, so that no spurious composition thereafter can be added. It also explains the meaning and the importance of the meaning of the Granth.

\*\*\*   This is a description of 84 Indian ragas and out of which 31 are included in the standard edition of the Granth.

It may be pointed out that Guru Arjan composed the largest number<sup>122</sup> of sacred verses including his famous composition Sukhmani which were incorporated in the Adi Granth.

With the compilation of Adi-Granth, Guru Arjan provided to the Sikhs their own holy Granth like the Bible, and Quran of the Christians and the Muslims respectively, which contains the bani of the True Lord, as revealed to the Gurus and the bhaktas (both Hindus and Muslims) for the meditation and worship of their adherents, and controlling and guiding their socio-religious behaviour and outlook according to the dogmas and beliefs as conceived by the founder of the Sikh movement. But still, the purpose would have been lost, if Guru Arjan had not evolved<sup>a</sup> series of socio-religious practices around the nucleus of the Adi Granth. With this object in view, Guru Arjan not only compiled the Adi Granth but also institutionalized it by installing it after its completion in the Central Hall of Harimandir at Amritsar, with utmost reverence and zeal and evolved a series of Sikh practices - daily kirtan, prakash and sukhasan of the Granth Sahib, Granth darbar isnan, which took the form of

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122. According to Mohinder Kaur Gill, Guru Arjan's total bani consists of: 1344 padas, 63 ashtpadian, 62 chhant, 463 sloks, 117 paurian and seven asfotak (acrostic) poems and four long poems i.e. Baramah, Bawan Akhri, Sukhmani and Thitten (Guru Arjan: Jeevan te Bani, (Delhi: National Book Shop, 1975), pp. 109-110).

religious rituals of the Sikhs around the nucleus of the Granth. These rituals assigned a sacred image to the Granth. Guru Arjan declared that the "Pothi (Granth) is the abode of Parmeshar",<sup>123</sup> for it contained His word or sabad as revealed to the Gurus or the bhaktas. Interestingly, this sacred image was in consonance with the original concept of Sikhism that sabad is the guru.<sup>124</sup> But it may be pointed out that in Sikhism sabad is not exclusive to a class of gurus only, rather as evidenced in the Guru-Granth, it is the sum total or essence of collective wisdom of the sages, bhaktas and the gurus of India.<sup>125</sup>

#### Gurdwara:

The genesis of gurdwara institution could be traced to the forum of dharamsala as evolved and sprang up during the time of Guru Nanak. Wherever he went during his missionary travels, he <sup>had</sup> established sangats.<sup>126</sup> Guru Nanak did not remain at one such place and, therefore, he left instructions to his followers to build a place of

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123. Adi Granth, Sarang, M.5, p. 1226.

124. (i) ਸਬਦ ਗੁਰੂ ਸਰਤ ਧੁਨ ਚੇਨਾ।

Ibid., Ramkali, M.1, p. 943.

(ii) ਸਬਦ ਗੁਰ ਪੀਰਾ ਗਹਿਰ ਗੋਭੀਰਾ।

Ibid., Rag Sorath, M.5, p. 635.

125. Taran Singh, loc. cit., p. 31.

126. Varan Bhai Gurdas, op.cit., Var I, Pauri 27, p.23.

congregation or dharamsala where they could regularly meet and sing Lord's praises,<sup>127</sup> and thus sprang up a network of Sikh sangats and dharamsalas which became the centres of Sikh missionary activities.<sup>128</sup> These centres were established in Kamrup (Assam), Bihar, Cuttak, Surat, Nanakmata (in the Kumaon Hills), Khatmandu, Jallalabad, Kabul and at several other places.<sup>129</sup>

To a layman, these dharamsalas were considered most sacred as long as the corporeal Guru temporarily resided there and delivered his sermons and recited the bani to the sangats that flocked to him. But they were also viewed as sacred so long as the sangats assembled and recited the bani of the guru because there was the mystical presence of God in the sangat.<sup>130</sup> However, unlike the temples or the mosques

127. ਘਰਿ ਘਰਿ ਆਦਰ ਧਰਮਸਾਲ ਹੋਵੇ ਕੀਰਤਨੁ ਸਦਾ ਵਸੇਐ॥

Ibid.

128. Bhagat Singh, op.cit., p.25.

129. Ibid.; Similar account of the emergence of these missionary centres is given by Teja Singh, Sikh Polity in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries (New Delhi: Oriental Publishers and Distributors, 1978), p. 25.

130. (i) ਇਕ ਸਿਖ ਦੇਇ ਸਾਧ ਸਗ, ਪਜੀ ਪਮੋਸਰ।  
Varan Bhai Gurdas, Var 13, Pauri 19, p. 236.

(ii) ... ਵਿਚ ਸੰਗਤ ਹਰਿ ਪ੍ਰਭੁ ਵਸੈ ਜੀਓ॥

Adi Granth, Parbhati, M.4, p.94.

(iii) ਸਤਿ ਸਗਤਿ ਮਹਿ ਹਰਿ ਹਰਿ ਵਸਿਆ ਮਿਲ ਸਗਤਿ ਹਰਿ ਗੁਣ ਜਾਣ।

Ibid., Majh, M.4, p. 1335.

these dharamsalas used to lose its sacred character when there was no assemblage of the sangat.

The history of the development of Sikh institution of dharamsala before Guru Arjan Dev, suggests that it had acquired a rudimentary form to keep the sangat intact around the person of the Guru. Guru Nanak established his residence at Kartarpur after the termination of his udasis and erected a dharamsala for the Sikh congregation where it became<sup>a</sup> daily ritual with the Guru to recite Sodar and Arati in the evening and Japuji in the morning.<sup>131</sup> He also maintained a free community kitchen (langar) and built some houses which were given free to the visiting Sikhs for their stay.<sup>132</sup> Thus Kartarpur emerged as the central dharamsala of the Sikhs under Guru Nanak Dev. But Guru Angad, on his accession to the gur-gaddi, shifted his headquarter to Khadur Sahib, and which was again shifted to Goindwal under Guru Amar Das, and then to Amritsar by Guru Ram Das, the fourth Guru of the Sikhs. Thus these centres - Kartarpur, Khadur Sahib and Goindwal emerged as the central dharamsalas of the Sikhs during the tenure of the respective Gurus. They were now only sacred in the eyes of the adherents as they commemorated the visit and being the abode of the respective Gurus. But they could not

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131. Varan Bhai Gurdas, op.cit., Var I, Pauri 38, p.34.

132. S.M. Latif, op.cit., p.246.

be equated with the temples and the mosques as there remained no perpetual presence of the guru in the form of any symbolic authority. Guru Arjan, therefore, perceived the dire need of providing a symbolic permanence of the guru in these dharamsalas or sikh centres. He felt an urgent need of <sup>the</sup> founding of some definite institutions having symbolic religious authority where the Sikhs could converge upon and regulate their socio-religious life as a whole. Moreover, by the time of the accession of Guru Arjan Dev, the Sikhs became numerous and there were many cities where Sikhs were found.<sup>133</sup> It was <sup>a</sup> very difficult task for them to cover long distances to pay homage to the Guru and seek his blessings when the means of communication were not advanced. Guru Arjan thus conceived the idea of converting the existing centres of Sikhism i.e. the dharamsalas into such sacred institutions transcending the limit of time and space.

The fourth Guru Ram Das had already initiated this process by starting the work of excavation ~~of~~ the tank of Amritsar in Chak Ram Das Pura, and Guru Arjan conceived the idea of constructing a temple Harimandir ~~amidst~~ the Amritsrovar.<sup>134</sup> The structure and design of the temple

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133. Guru Nanak and Nanak Panthis, op.cit., p. 51.

134. Gurpartap Suraj Granth, op.cit., p. 1855.



was planned and designed by Guru Arjan Dev himself.<sup>135</sup> He seems to have made conscious efforts while planning its structure and design to make it a symbol of basic teachings and the philosophy of Sikhism. It was, therefore, significantly planned to build on a lower plinth than the buildings of the surrounding area and the big hall which was designed as the interior of this temple was provided with four gates on each direction unlike the Hindu temples and Muslim Mosques which had only one entrance. The structure and style symbolically represented that God could be attained by bending low in submission i.e. acquiring the great virtue of humility, and the four gates symbolized that God is omnipresent and does not live in one direction and the Sikh temple is open to all the four castes of the Hindus, to all the four religions in India and all the people of the world from all the four directions. He thus wanted to make this institution a symbol of the Sikh gospel of universal brotherhood of man and the unity of God.

It may also be pointed out that the earliest Sikh tradition carried on by Giani Gian Singh, Bhai Kahan Singh and Macauliffe and upto the twentieth century<sup>136</sup> reveals

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135. Madanjit Kaur, op.cit., p.11.

136. Gurpartap Suraj Granth, op.cit., p. 1856; Bhai Gian Singh Ji Giani, Twarikh Guru Khalsa, op.cit., p. 375; Macauliffe, op.cit., Vol. IV, p.10; Bhai Kahan Singh, Gur Sabad Ratnakar Mahan Kosh: Encyclopaedia of Sikh Literature, 2nd edn. (1931 rpt. Patiala: Bhasha Vibhag, 1960, One Volume), p.57.

that the foundation of this temple was laid by the fifth Guru Arjan Dev himself. 1st Magh, 1645 BK. (1589 A.D.) is widely accepted as the date of its foundation.<sup>137</sup> But the later Sikh tradition, however, believes that the foundation stone of this temple was laid by a Muslim saint, Mir Mohammad popularly known as Mian Mir in 1589 A.D., and the first recorded evidence to this effect is available in The Punjab Notes and Queries.<sup>138</sup> But this fact is not supported by the citation of any source by the author who made this entry. Moreover, this fact is also neither supported by any of the earlier Sikh sources nor even by the biographers of Mian Mir. Nevertheless, this tradition became very popular in the twentieth century and was adopted both by the Indian and European historians. So much so that this version was followed in the Report Sri Darbar Sahib.<sup>139</sup>

After the completion of <sup>the</sup> Granth, it was formally installed in Harimandir Sahib on August 1604 (1661 BK.)<sup>140</sup> and its installation was <sup>a</sup> great landmark in

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137. Macauliffe, op.cit., p. 10; Kahan Singh, op.cit., p.10; Teja Singh & Ganda Singh, op.cit., p. 28.
138. The Panjab Notes and Queries, (1849-1884), Vol. I, Typed Copy (Sikh Reference Library), n.d., p. 141.
139. Report Sri Darbar Sahib, pp. 8-9.
140. Bhai Gian Singh Ji Giani, op.cit., p. 396; Report Sri Darbar Sahib, p. 9.

the culmination of the institution of gurdwara as the Adi Granth, according to Guru Arjan, "was the abode of the True Guru."<sup>141</sup> Placed as it was in the Central Hall of Harimandir, it transformed the Harimandir into the symbolic authority of True Lord. In view of this nature of the Granth as the explicit embodiment of God or the True Guru,<sup>142</sup> it was given a very high status at the time of installation in Harimandir Sahib.<sup>143</sup> Its installation also speaks of the continuity in the thought and content of the founder Guru as Guru Nanak used his own compositions for worship and this was an elaboration of the original position of the bani (word).<sup>144</sup>

141. "ਪੋਥੀ ਪਾਸਰ ਕਾ ਥਾਨੁ"

Adi Granth, Sarang, M.5, p. 1226.

142. (i) ਗੁਰੂ ਰਿਦ ਗੁਰ ਕੇ ਇਹ ਜਾਨਹੁ ਉਤਮ ਹੈ ਸਭ ਕਾਨ ਰਹੈ ਹੈ...॥5॥

Bhai Santokh Singh, op.cit., p. 2140.

(ii) ਨਾਮ ਸੁ ਨਾਮੀ ਕੇ ਭੇਦ ਨਹੀ ਇਹ ਮੂਰਤਿ ਸ੍ਰੀ ਕਰਤਾਰ ਸੁਹਾਏ॥8॥

Ibid.

(iii) ਗੁਰੂ ਕਲਜਗ ਭਯੋ ਸ੍ਰੀ ਗੁਰੂ ਰੂਪ ਮਹਾਨ।।।॥412॥

Gur Bilas Patshahi Chhevin, op.cit., p.90.

143. On this day, the Granth was installed on a high pedestal singhasan on a manji (cot) under a canopy. The other symbols of royalty - palki, chaur were also used in the service of Granth. Guru Arjan bowed in front of the Granth and seated on a lower level. At night, the Granth was put on a new bedding while the Guru slept on the floor near the Granth.

144. J.S. Grewal, "Perspective on Early Sikh History", loc. cit., p.36.

Guru Arjan also made arrangements and laid down the daily religious routine of the Granth-Darbar with regard to the recitation of the Granth, performance of kirtan and other ceremonial practices in the service of the sacred Granth,<sup>145</sup> and imparted instructions for the guidance of his devotees regarding the management of the langar in the name of the Guru.<sup>146</sup>

Soon it led to the process of fission. As per instructions of the fifth Guru,<sup>147</sup> the copies of Granth were made and installed in the dharamsalas and other Sikh centres and converted them into gurdwaras as per structure and design of the Harimandir. It thus became easy for the local Sikh sangat to assemble there in the presence of their Guru (The Adi Granth) to perform their daily religious routine. Unlike the institution of dharamsala, from which the institution of gurdwara finally evolved and emerged during the time of Guru Arjan, with a temple, adoring and enshrining the sacred Granth, a sarovar and a subsidiary institution of langar, the gurdwara catered to the three needs of nam, dan and isnan, the cardinal adjuncts of

145. Gur Bilas Patshahi Chhevin, (Hi) op.cit., pp. 130, 134 & 135.

146. Mahima Parkash (Kavita), op.cit., p. 319, 363.

147. ਬਹੁਤ ਉਤਾਰੇ ਜਗ ਮਹਿ ਬਾਵੇ। ਘਰ ਘਰ ਗੁਰ ਪ੍ਰਸਾਦ ਕਰਾਵੇ।

Sant Rain Prem Singh, op.cit., p.665.

simran.<sup>148</sup> It may be pointed out that in the dharamsalas, the Sikh congregation used to assemble in the name of the guru to recite and meditate on His name and the guru was considered to be mystically present in the sangat, but now in the gurdwaras the Sikhs assembled in the very presence of their Guru, the Adi Granth. Moreover, isnan (ablution), spiritual as well as physical, was one of the cardinal aspects of Sikh teachings. A great difficulty was experienced by the Sikh sangats in covering some distance, and in many cases long distances, by the sangats in all seasons for having a bath in a river or a canal flowing nearby. We have no inkling about any adequate arrangement for the collective bath of the sangats in early dharamsalas of the Sikhs i.e. Kartarpur, Khadur Sahib or at Goindwal. Similarly, another point of distinction is that the Guru-ka-langar was run in the dharamsalas with the voluntary aid and the services of the Sikh sangats, but in the gurdwara it was now maintained regularly on large scale as usual and

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148. (i) ਭਉ ਭਗਤਿ ਭਉ ਮੰਤ੍ਰ ਦੇ ਨਾਮ ਦਲ ਇਸਨਾਨੁ ਦ੍ਰਿੜਾਇਆ।  
Varan Bhai Gurdas, Var 5, Pauri 13, p. 97.  
 (ii) ਸੁਨ ਗੁਰ ਗੁਰ ਪਰਿ ਆਇਆ। ਨਾਮ ਦਲੁ ਇਸਨਾਨੁ ਦ੍ਰਿੜਾਇਆ।  
Adi Granth, Sri Rag, M. 5, p. 73.  
 (iii) ਦ੍ਰਿੜ ਨਾਮ ਦਲੁ ਇਸਨਾਨੁ ਸੁਚਾਰੀ॥  
Ibid., Suhi, M.5, p. 740.

consequently the offerings or the donations were fixed in the form of daswandh (tithe) out of one's income to meet the growing expenses of the langar and Sikh Church. It may also be pointed out that the word gurdwara was used by the fifth Guru himself and not by the sixth Guru as is held by some historians.<sup>149</sup> This is evident from his own bani<sup>150</sup> as well as some references made in Gur Partap Suraj Granth.<sup>151</sup>

On the basis of the above discussion on the origin and development of the Institution of gurdwara, it may be seen that "A gurdwara does not mean a temple built on the place visited by a Guru" as is held by Indubhushan Bannerjee,<sup>152</sup> but in the literal and practical sense it denotes the 'abode of the True Lord' (Adi Granth), as it

149. W. Owen Cole, Piara Singh Sambhi, op.cit., p.59.

150. ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰੇ ਹਰਿ ਕੀਰਤਨ ਸੁਣੀਐ, ਸਤਿਗੁਰ ਭੇਟ ਹਰਿ ਜਸ ਮੁਖ ਭਈਐ;  
ਕਲ ਕਲੇਸ ਮਿਟਾਇ ਸਤਿਗੁਰ, ਹਰਿ ਦਰਸਾਹਿ ਦੇਵੈ ਮਾਠਾ ਹੈ।

Adi Granth, Maru Sohila, M.5, C.f. Kahn Singh, Gurmat Prabhakar, (Amritsar: Wazir Hind Press, 1912), p.359.

151. Bhai Santokh Singh has also used the word 'gurdwara' for the institution during the time of Guru Arjan (See Sri Gurpartap Suraj Granth, p.2320). Thus it is proved beyond doubt that for Harimandir, the symbolic word gurdwara was made use during the time of Guru Arjan.

152. Indubhushan Banerjee, op.cit., p. 261.

contains the word of the Supreme Lord. Strictly speaking, gurdwara is any place where a copy of the Guru Granth is installed.<sup>153</sup> Thus the sublimity of gurudom saved Sikhism from splintering into rival sects. With the establishment of the institution of gurdwara there remained no place for a living guru in the Sikh religion because the belief that gurbani is the guru and guru is the gurbani<sup>154</sup> was held by the Sikh gurus as well as the followers and as such the gurdwaras became the focal points of all the socio-religious activities of the Sikhs. But in many cases, now a days, the places of personal residence are converted into temporary gurdwaras by installing the copy of Adi Granth to perform social and religious ceremonies. Even some devoted Sikhs had permanently installed the copies of the Adi Granth at their homes so that "the Guru should be always by the side of the disciple, or at any rate, easily accessible."<sup>155</sup> But on the contrary, the corporeal Guru can never be always accessible because of the limitations of being a human, conditioned by time and space. Thus this concept of the gurdwara institution went a long way in doing away with the ostentatious personal character of the guruship in

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153. W. Owen Cole & Piara Singh Sambhi, op.cit., p.58.

154. Gobind Singh Mansukhani, op.cit., p. 181.

155. Ibid.

Sikhism. By giving impersonal, abstract and continuous character to the institution of guruship in the form of sabad or bani, by compiling, and installing the Adi Granth in the Central Hall of Harimandir, and by assigning it the status of the guru, Guru Arjan brought home to the Sikhs the original concept of the guruship which was the word or the bani. Besides, the principle of unity and equality was kept intact by the institution of gurdwara. Moreover, in precincts of the gurdwara and in the presence of the Granth Sahib, the impersonal Guru, the sense of equality was reinforced among the Sikhs by congregational worship and participation in the langar irrespective of their social position or political power.<sup>156</sup> The gurdwaras thus became the practical laboratories both for <sup>the</sup> demonstration and practice of the Sikh teachings. Guru Arjan provided a permanent place of worship and abode to the Adi Granth. More than that, it was not merely an institution, it was a concept, in its image, a temple could be raised anywhere wherever there were followers of the Sikh Gurus. Thus, the Guru and the Sikhs were integrated to each other through the Granth and the gurdwara. In summation, a Sikh Church is established.

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156. J.S. Grewal, "Perspective on Early Sikh History", loc. cit., p. 39.



## CHAPTER IV

### SIKH INSTITUTIONS : SANGAT, PANGAT AND MASAND

After institutionalizing the spiritual aspect of the Sikh religion by providing the object of worship and place of worship, Guru Arjan evolved to their perfection some subsidiary institutions which not only integrated the Sikh followers to the institutional framework but also made certain social actions<sup>a</sup> part and parcel of the organizational apparatus suggesting activity and dynamism. No religion is a social movement unless it has adherents following an organized socio-religious activity. In this context the present chapter embraces the discussion on sangat, pangat (langar) and masand institutions.

#### Sangat:

According to Dewan Singh, the word sangat literally means companionship, company or society.<sup>1</sup> The word sang (company) is also used for the sangat (society) as is evident from Guru Arjan's bani.<sup>2</sup> Originally the idea with regard to the sangat was that of holy congregation or gur-sangat established by Guru Nanak during his travels.<sup>3</sup>

1. Dr. Dewan Singh, "Sikh Dharam which Sangat da Sankalap", Nanak Prakash Patrika, Sangat Vishesh Ank (Patiala: Sri Guru Granth Sahib Studies Department, Punjabi University, June, 1987), p.2.
2. ਗੁਰੂ ਮੇਰੇ ਸੰਗਿ ਸਦਾ ਹੋ ਠਾਠੇ। ਸਿਮਰਿ ਸਿਮਰਿ ਤਿਸੁ ਸਦਾ ਸਮਾਠੇ।  
Adi Granth, Asa, M.5, p.394.
3. Varan Bhai Gurdas, op.cit., Var 1, Pauri 27, p.24.

But it may be pointed out here that it is not the historic person Nanak but the Guru in him who established these sangats for the perpetual flow of His name<sup>4</sup> and spiritual elevation of the Sikhs for the attainment of Sachkhand. Thus it is God, the Primal Guru who could establish the sangats and the sangat itself cannot establish any one as the guru. Therefore, True Guru (God) is the primary source of the sangat and the latter is the perpetual current for the successful communication of His message till eternity.<sup>5</sup> It may also be pointed out that the concept of sangat was created in the image of God because according to Guru Nanak, "A man becomes holy in the association of the holy and acquires virtues forsaking vices."<sup>6</sup> It indicates that the sangat is the abode of the virtuous because, according to Nanak, God is the only fountain of all the virtues when he says that "All the virtues are Thine, none are mine."<sup>7</sup> It also reflects the concept of moral man created in the image of God because Nanak categorically says that "devotion is not possible without virtues",<sup>8</sup> and, therefore, one should cultivate

4. ਗੁਰ ਮਹਿ ਆਪੁ ਸਮੇਇ ਸਬਦੁ ਵਰਤਾਇਆ।

Adi Granth, Var Malhar, M.1, p. 1279.

5. Dewan Singh, op.cit., p.4.

6. ਉਤਮ ਮੰਗਤ ਉਤਮ ਹੋਵੇ। ਗੁਣ ਕੇ ਪਾਵੈ ਅਵਗੁਣ ਹੋਵੈ।  
Adi Granth, Asa, M.1, p.414.

7. Adi Granth, Japji, Slok XXI, p.

8. Ibid.

and acquire these virtues through the social communication of the virtuous (sangat or sat-sangat). Thus it is through this institution that Nanak has integrated man with the sangat and the latter with the nucleus of the Guru though in a mystical form. Bhai Gurdas also makes a mention of the integration of the man with the nucleus of the Guru through the medium of sangat, when he compares this institution to a river and says, "Just as the water from any source may ultimately lose itself in the sea by reaching a river, similarly by associating the sangat one might lose one self in the Guru."<sup>9</sup>

Thus the fundamental object behind the organization of sangats was to communicate the divine message and to elevate the lives of its members for the attainment of Truth.<sup>10</sup> Since it is <sup>a</sup>very important vehicle in the realization of God and, therefore, in Sikhism it has been termed as chatsal (madrassa) or school of spiritual learning of divine wisdom and the Sikhs are exhorted to join such congregations for the recitation of God's name and acquisition of divine knowledge and His virtues.<sup>11</sup> But it

9. ਏਕ ਅਉ ਅਨੈਕ ਮੇਕ ਬ੍ਰਹਮ ਬਝੇਕ  
ਟੇਕ ਸ੍ਰੋਤ ਸਰਿਤਾ ਸਮੁੰਦ੍ਰ ਆਤਮ ਸਮਾਨ ਹੈ॥੨੭॥ 63

Kabit Swayyae Bhai Gurdas ji ed. Ptv.Narain Singh Ji Giani (Amritsar: Bhai Buta Singh, Partap Singh Pustkan Wale, n.d.), Kavita 63, pp. 46-47.

10. Bhagat Singh, Sikh Polity in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries (New Delhi: Oriental Publishers and Distributors, 1978), p.24.

11. ਸਾਤ ਸੰਗਤਿ ਸਤਿਗੁਰ ਚਟਸਾਨ ਹੈ, ਜਿਤੁ ਹਰਿ ਗੁਣ ਸਿਖਾ।  
Adi Granth, Kanra ki var, M. 4, p.1316.

may be pointed out that as Sikhism developed the sat-sangat came to mean association of the gurmukhs, or speaking plainly, the Sikhs. Here arose the idea of Sikh congregations which came to be known as sangat.<sup>12</sup>

Teja Singh is of the opinion that "in the time of Guru Nanak the Sikh sangats or congregations were scattered all over India, even outside, and the centres of preachings appointed by him were called manjis."<sup>13</sup> Wherever Nanak went during his missionary travels, he established sangats and thus sprang up a network of sangats and dharamsalas which became centres of Sikh activities.<sup>14</sup> Each sangat was in the charge of a leader appointed by the Guru, called manji because he sat on a cot (manji) while preaching to the people.<sup>15</sup> The fact that Nanak established Sikh sangat

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12. Indu Bhushan Banerjee, Evolution of Khalsa, 3rd edn. (1936 rpt. Calcutta: A. Mukherjee & Co. Pvt. Ltd., 1972), Vol. 1, p.256.

13. Teja Singh, Paper Published on "Are There Sects in Sikhism", Panjab Past & Present, Vol. XII-I, April 1978, p. 137.

14. It may be pointed out that Nanak during the course of his travels appointed Bhai Lallo in the north and Sheikh Sajjan in the south west of the Punjab, Gopal Dass was in Benaras, Jhanda Badi in Bushair, Budhan Shah in Kiratpur, Mahi in Mahisar, Kalijug, a priest's son, in Jagannath Puri, Devlut in Lushai (Tibet), Salis Rai in Patna and Behar, Raja Shivnabh in Ceylon, and host of other workers were scattered over the whole territory visited by Guru Nanak in and outside India. See: Teja Singh, Sikhism, Its Ideals and Institutions, 5th edn. (1938 rpt. Amritsar: Khalsa Brothers, Mai Sewan, 1970), p.37; Bhagat Singh, Sikh Polity in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries (New Delhi: Oriental Publishers and Distributors, 1978), p. 37.

15. Ibid.

wherever he went, both at home and outside is also supported by Ganda Singh and according to him therein 'they met daily, generally in the evening, to hear the Guru's teachings and sing his hymns, and pray to God, and to discuss and solve their common problems. The forums of sangats were known as the dharamsalas in accordance<sup>16</sup> with the central organization established by Guru Nanak at Kartarpur after the termination of his udasis. Duncan Greenlees, seems to be depending on his robust imagination when he reconstructs the Kartarpur sangat (community). He says that the Sikhs ate their first meal together as one family after 9.30 A.M. and had their dinner after the recitation of Rahiras. At about 10 P.M. they sang the sohila and then all slept, though a few rose for prayer also ~~at~~ the night.<sup>17</sup>

The nascent movement was confronted with inner crisis, therefore, Guru Angad could not maintain his contact with the distant sangats nor could Guru Amar Das due to his old age undertake long journeys to keep contact with

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16. Ganda Singh, Paper "Guru Nanak's Impact on History", Published in Punjab Past & Present, Vol. III, 1969, p. 414.

17. Duncan Greenlees, The Gospel of the Guru-Granth Sahib, 2nd ed. (1952 rpt. Adyar, Madras: The Theosophical Publishing House, 1960), pp. Liv & Lv. (introduction).

the sangats.<sup>18</sup> But Guru Amar Das made a determined bid to make these sangats functional and regular as far as possible in their normal routine for which they were established by the founder Guru. With this objective in view he "reorganised the Manji System"<sup>19</sup> to consolidate the scattered sangats and "divided his spiritual Kingdom into twenty two manjis or dioceses, each under a pious and a trusted preacher appointed by the Guru"<sup>20</sup> whose duty

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18. Guru Angad could not undertake long tours to visit the distant Sikh sangats established by his predecessor Guru owing to serious challenge to save the followers of Nanak from total absorption by the Hindu mass. Besides, there was the further possibility that the followers might gradually narrow down into a sect of quietist (udasis) which emerged remarkably, under the leadership of Baba Sri Chand, the eldest son of Guru Nanak. Under this situation, his constant stay at the headquarter was quite essential to counteract and impart some what distinct character to the Sikh movement. Thus Guru Angad though could not maintain any living link with the distant sangats spread over vast area yet "some connection with the centre was kept up by constant visits of the Sikhs to the Guru". See Teja Singh, Sikhism, Its Ideals and Institutions, 5th edn. (1938 rpt. Amritsar: Khalsa Brothers, 1970), p.38.
19. Teja Singh, op.cit., p.137.
20. Ibid., p.66; Dr. Sahib Singh, Jeevan Virtant Sri Guru Arjan Dev Ji (Amritsar: Singh Brothers, 1969), p.34; Indu Bhushan Banerjee, op.cit., pp. 168 & 257; Bhai Kahan Singh, Gur Sabad Ratnakar Mahan Kosh: Encyclopaedia of Sikh Literature, 2nd edn. (1931 rpt. Patiala: Bhasha Vibhag, 1960), p.2997; H.R. Gupta, History of the Sikh Gurus, (New Delhi: U.C. Kapur & Sons, 1973), p.277.

was to preach the mission of the Sikh Guru and to keep the local body in touch with the centre. Each of these manjis or dioceses were further divided into smaller sections called pihris.<sup>21</sup> It would appear from the list of the manjis<sup>22</sup> that the sangat activity had contracted and now was confined to the geographical limits of the then Panjab and its adjacent area but its further division into pihris speaks of the expanded scope of its activity as well as membership. It was now much more cohesive and consolidated.<sup>23</sup>

Under Guru Ram Das, the process was pushed ahead with the foundation of Chak Ram Das Pura (Amritsar) and holy tank of Amritsar,<sup>24</sup> a new centre for the Sikh sangat in the heart of majah doab inhabited by the Jat peasantry which was brought into the fold of Sikhism. Similarly, Guru Arjan also created some important centres for the Sikh sangats - Tarn Taran, Kartarpur in Doaba and founded Hargobindpur etc.<sup>25</sup> But the most significant step which

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21. Dr. Bhagat Singh, op.cit., p. 27; Teja Singh, op.cit., p. 38.

22. Please see appendix-I.

23. Gokul Chand Narang, Transformation of Sikhism, 5th edn. (rpt. New Delhi: New Book Society of India, 1960), p.33.

24. According to Bansavalinama and Ganesh Das Badehra the construction of the city was completed in 1577.

25. Dr. Bhagat Singh, op.cit., p.29.

Guru Arjan took in the organization and consolidation of the sangat institution was the organization of the masand institution. Its significance in terms of Sikh sangats could be gauged from the evidence of Dabistan which suggests that "a large number became the Sikhs of the Guru."<sup>26</sup> It is also supported by the account of Bhai Gurdas that the Sikh sangats during the time of Guru Arjan Dev were widely spread to distant places like Delhi, Agra, Thanesar, Kashmir and Kabul.<sup>27</sup> But it is not merely significant in terms of removing the apprehension of loosening the ties with the sacred authority because the masand was a significant link between the distant sangat and the Guru. But still, sociologically, it had not formed an autonomous body with organized structure to direct and regulate the conduct of its members.

Moreover, Guru Arjan's pontification was a significant stage when Sikh movement witnessed the development and the creation of new places of their worship and symbols for the Sikhs to identify with, such as Amritsar, Tarn Taran, and

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26. Guru Nanak and Nanak Panthis, Extract translated in English from Dabistan-i-Mazahib, pub. Panjab Past & Present, Vol. III, 1969, p.52.

27. Varan Bhai Gurdas, Var 11, Pauri 26-27, pp. 203-204.



Kartarpur. As a consequence of large scale planning and construction activity of major projects such as tanks and temples of Amritsar, Tarn Taran and Kartarpur and Paoli at Dabi Bazar, Lahore, it called for liberal aid in the form of men and material on the part of the Sikh sangats which they rendered actively in the form of doing physical labour (kar sewa)<sup>28</sup> and financial aid (kar-bheta)<sup>29</sup> and also played a vital role in the planning, and execution and administration of the various projects in progress. Thus the sphere of functions of the sangats were fairly enlarged under the tenure of Guru Arjan Dev.

This fact that the Sikh movement had witnessed a distinct developmental stage during the pontification of Guru Arjan Dev also posed some pertinent problems. The foremost among them was the Guru's relationship with the adherents because Prithi Chand's challenge whose claims to the gur-gaddi on the basis of having been the eldest son were traditionally sound and as such could detract the followers from the real guru. There was an apprehension that the guru would fail to satisfy the needs of his

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28. Bhai Santokh Singh, Sri Gurpartap Suraj Granth, 4th edn. (1929 rpt. Amritsar: Khalsa Samachar, 1963), pp. 1806-7, 1855, 1859; Bhai Gian Singh Ji Giani, Twarikh Guru Khalsa, 2nd edn. (1919 rpt. Patiala: Bhasha Vibhag, 1970), pp. 362-63.
29. M.A. Macauliffe, The Sikh Religion, Its Gurus, Sacred Writings and Authors, 2nd edn. (Indian) (1909 rpt. New Delhi: S. Chand & Co., 1972), Vol. III, p. 8.

followers particularly the psychological ones. Confronted with the threat of disintegration within the Sikh movement, the need for proper management and mobilization was actually felt.

In view of this significant development of the Sikh movement, and the peculiar situation as obtained during his pontification, Guru Arjan conceived the dire need to improve and reorganise the sangat organisation. With this object in view Guru Arjan raised a stable institutional matrix in the form of gurdwara because with the expansion of the sangats at different places, it had become imperative to link them more closely with some sacred institution which may be permanent in its nature and where the cohesive needs of the sangats - nam, dan and isnan could be catered to. Guru Arjan established such an institution in the form of Harimandir, after the installation of Adi Granth, in the Central Hall of this temple which became a central place of the sangats organisation. Thus this gurdwara enshrining the sacred Granth (impersonal Guru) with sarovar and traditionally attached institution of langar could cater to the socio-psychological and religious needs of the sangats and could complete the process of the Sikh congregations started long ago under the founder Guru. Gradually it led to the process of fission in accordance with the advice of

the fifth Guru,<sup>30</sup> and the copies of the Granth were made and installed in the dharamsalas and other centres of the Sikhs and converted into gurdwaras and it became easy for the local Sikh sangats to assemble there in the presence of the impersonal Guru (Granth) to perform their religious routine of 'nam, dan and isnan'.<sup>31</sup>

Guru Arjan thus integrated the man and the sangat with the nucleus of the Guru or comparable institution in the symbol of Adi Granth the impersonal Guru or two together and its abode gurdwara became a permanent forum of the sangat. But hitherto, a man, other than at the Sikh headquarter, was integrated to the nucleus of the guru through the medium of sangat, for the guru was considered to be mystically present in the holy sangats. But now the institution of Granth became the defacto Guru of the Sikhs because Guru Arjan declared "the Granth is the abode of the God"<sup>32</sup> because it contained His word. Thus Guru Arjan assigned<sup>to</sup> it a very unique and high status and the Sikhs were made to assemble around the impersonal Guru (Granth) for worship and protection of the interests in

30. Sant Rain Prem Singh, Sri Guru Pur Prakash Granth, (Amritsar: Gyani Press, 1979), p. 665.

31. Bhai Gurdas, op.cit., Var 12, Pauri 16, p. 218.

32. Adi Granth, Sarang, M.5, p.

all walks of life, and its abode gurdwara was made the permanent forum of the Sikh sangat for meditation and recitation of the bani in praise of God in the presence of the impersonal Guru for the attainment of Sachkhand. According to Bhai Santokh Singh, the author of Sri Gurpartap Suraj Granth, Guru Arjan also "enjoined upon every Sikh to get up early in the morning, clean his bowels clean his body by taking a bath, say his prayer and meditate on His name."<sup>33</sup> But apart from saying his individual prayer at home, Arjan Dev also made it obligatory for a Sikh to visit (Harimandir) gurdwara for congregational worship before starting his day's work. He is obliged to visit the gurdwara again after the cessation of his work in the evening for saying his prayer and ardas.<sup>34</sup> But this injunction of visiting the central gurdwara was not made obligatory to those Sikhs who were residing at far off places from this holy shrine. In that case, they were obliged to visit the local dharamsalas (subsequently converted into gurdwara) twice a day for that purpose.<sup>35</sup> Bhai Gurdas also makes it explicit while commenting on the daily observances of Sikh religious routine. He

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33. Sri Gurpartap Suraj Granth, op.cit., Ras 2, Ansu 54, p. 1862.

34. Ibid.

35. Ibid.

mentions that a Sikh besides performing his individual simran in the early morning (last watch of the night) after taking bath, his next duty was to go to the sangat to recite and listen<sup>to</sup> the hymns of the Gurus with deep reverence and concentration.<sup>36</sup> There are also specific instruction in Guru Arjan's own bani wherein he exhorted his Sikhs to visit the gurdwara for listening<sup>to</sup> kirtan in the praise of God.<sup>37</sup> Thus individual simran at home was not considered enough by Guru Arjan Dev but it was made a religious ritual (obligatory) for every Sikh to participate in the congregation in the gurdwara in the presence of the impersonal Guru. The idea behind it is to detach him from the worldly pursuits by absorbing his mind constantly in the recitation, meditation and listening to God's name to have communion with God, because this sort of detachment and concentration is a bit difficult at home in view of family obligations and very often the recitation of the bani becomes mere mechanical. But even if one succeeds in concentration by yogic discipline in some secluded place, it is at the cost of social behaviour, for a yogi develops unsocial habits which is contrary to the concept of sangat.

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36. Varan Bhai Gurdas, op.cit., Var 12, pauri 2.

37. ਗੁਰਗ੍ਰੰਥ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਜੀ, ਮਹਿਕਮਾ ਤੇਰਾ ਹਰਿ ਜਮ ਪੁਰ ਭਈਐ।  
Adi Granth, Maru Sohila, M.5, p.

Thus we may conclude that it was under the pontification of Guru Arjan Dev that there was a complete integration of the sangat institution with that of the basic institution of gurdwara which not only became a permanent forum for catering to the cohesive needs of the Sikh sangats - nam, dan and isnan, but also controlled and regulated the social and religious behaviour of the Sikhs (adherents) by making it a religious ritual with the Sikhs to visit the gurdwara daily for congregational worship and prayer. As a consequence of emergence of Harimandir, as the Central gurdwara of the Sikh sangats, the Sikh sangats from far and near started visiting this holy shrine whenever they could alongwith their respective masands when they visited the guru annually to deposit the amount of daswandh with the guru in the month of Baisakh. During these visits, the different sangat units had the opportunity not only of meeting the guru for having his blessing for the attainment of Sachkhand but also came in close contact with one another who were otherwise separated by distance. In consequence, observes Fauja Singh, "unbreakable bonds of union were formed which imparting solidarity and cohesion to the Sikh ranks, fused the far-flung and diverse units into a single, well-integrated organisation."<sup>38</sup>

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38. Fauja Singh, "Development of Sikhism under the Gurus", Sikhism, ed. L.M. Joshi (Patiala: Punjabi University, 1969), p. 17.

Pangat or Langar:

The institution of langar or pangat (free common messing), originating almost simultaneously,<sup>39</sup> is as old as the institution of sangat. In fact the sangat and the pangat formed necessary accompaniment of each other and were inseparable.<sup>40</sup> It may also be pointed out that all the visitors who called upon the Guru to pay homage and listen to his sermons brought something in kind as an offering in compliance with Guru's injunction to contribute a part of their income to the service of the community.<sup>41</sup> In the beginning when the people came in small number to the Guru wherever he stayed, the Guru used to distribute the offerings among the poor, the needy and those who were present. But when the congregations became larger and more regular, the Guru established a langar or free mess for all for the consumption of the offerings which were generally in the form of foodstuffs. In the kitchen, men or women worked together without any consideration of caste or social status.<sup>42</sup> Moreover, the fact that so many people (sangat) were living together at the same place for long periods necessitated the running of the common kitchen.

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39. Fauja Singh, loc. cit., p. 14.

40. H.R. Gupta, History of the Sikh Gurus, op.cit., p. 254.

41. ਗੁਰੂ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਜੀ ਦੇ ਸ਼ਬਦਾਂ ਦੇ ਅਨੁਸਾਰ ॥ ਤਨੁ ਮਨੁ ਮਨੁ ਮਨੁ ਮਨੁ ॥  
Adi Granth, Var Sarang, M.1., p. 1245.

42. H.R. Gupta, op.cit., p. 253.

It may be pointed out that during the age of Guru Nanak, castes, religions and social distinctions, and the idea of pollution were major problems plaguing the society which had received religious sanction. And this institution of langar struck at the very root of the evil of caste, class and religious distinctions. Besides, it demolished the idea of pollution of food by the mere presence or touch of an untouchable because in guru-ka-langar everyone sat and ate at the same place (pangat) and shared the same food.<sup>43</sup> Moreover, food was prepared in the common kitchen by the combined efforts of the members of the sangat, both men and women, irrespective of any distinction of caste, religion and their status. It was conceived as a potent institution for imparting practical lesson in the service of humanity, in spreading equality and universal brotherhood, in removing untouchability, the ideals in consonance with the tenets of Sikhism. Commenting on the significance of this institution, Fauja Singh observes that the institution of langar performed a four-fold function, it imparted a liberal dimension to the sangat, indicated functioning efficiency, translated the principle of equality into practice and served as cementing force among the followers

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43. Daljeet Singh, Sikhism, A Comparative Study of Its Theology and Mysticism (New Delhi: Sterling Publishers, Pvt. Ltd., 1979), p.261.



of Sikhism.<sup>44</sup> Hence it possessed the potentiality of social reform in society where rigidity of casteism and sectarianism segregated people.

After having settled as a householder at Kartarpur in the <sup>+</sup>later part of his life, Guru Nanak is said to have established dharamsala at Kartarpur which became a regular forum of the Sikh sangats. Here collective boarding and lodging of the followers created a dire need to organize the community kitchen (free langar) which was organized<sup>45</sup> with the common offerings of the Sikh sangats in cash or kind as part of dan, an obligated adjunct of simran,<sup>46</sup> or rendering seva (service) in the form of cooking food, procuring wood for the kitchen, water service, cleaning utensils or serving food in the mess. Thus the langar institution emerged as a subsidiary institution of Sikh dharamsala.

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44. Fauja Singh, loc.cit., p. 15.

45. The first meal was provided at 9.30 a.m. and the dinner after the performance of Rehiras at sunset which the Sikhs took as one family. It is also mentioned that at about 10 p.m. they sang the Sohila and then all slept, though a few rose for prayer also in the night. For details see: Duncan Greenlees, op.cit., pp. Liv-Lv. This fact is also supported by H.R. Gupta when he says that Guru Nanak House at Kartarpur served as dharamsala a place of worship as well as free mess, op.cit., p. 254, which indicates that boarding and lodging arrangements existed in that dharamsala.

46. Adi Granth, M.5, p. 73, 740.

It was continued by the second Guru, Angad Dev, at Khadur Sahib<sup>47</sup> but it was Guru Amar Das who not only maintained and elaborated<sup>48</sup> the institution of langar at Goindwal but gave a new dimension to it.<sup>49</sup> The langar of nam and degh was started at Amritsar by the fourth Guru, Ram Das on assuming the charge of gur-gaddi<sup>50</sup> and

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47. Under Guru Angad, langar was organised and run under the direct supervision of Guru's wife Mata Khivi. Sweet dish khir is stated have been always served in the langar. (Adi Granth, Var Satta & Balwand, p. 967).
48. Guru Amar Das added an other sweet dish pudding krah prasad which in course of time became the consecrated dish of the Sikhs.
49. According to the author of Mahima Prakash, Guru Amar Das made it a rule that no body could see him unless he had dinned in pangat at Guru's langar (Sarup Dass Bhalla, op.cit., p. 102), and thus would have gone a long way in breaking the chains of untouchability and caste prejudices, if any, with the followers of the guru. It is stated that even Emperor Akbar and Raja of Haripur had to dine from Guru's langar to listen to the sermons of the Guru. (Prakash Singh, "Sikh Dharam Which Sangat da Sankalp" Nanak Prakash Patrika, Sangat Visesh Ank (Patiala: Sri Guru Granth Sahib Studies Department), p. 27.
50. Twarikh Guru Khalsa, op.cit., p.344.

the food was served alike to the sangat and the guests in Guru's langar.<sup>51</sup>

On ascending gur-gaddi in 1581 A.D., Guru Arjan Dev also maintained the traditional langar organized by his father at Amritsar with the aid of voluntary offerings of the sangats. But soon he was faced with serious financial problem owing to his elder brother Prithi Chand's interception of the offerings from the sangat meant for the Guru. It reduced the financial resources of the Guru to such an extent that it became very difficult to maintain a regular langar and he was forced to offer one meal a day that too of gram flour.<sup>52</sup> But Guru Arjan could not afford to allow this situation of the langar to persist for a long time because a large number of Sikhs were visiting Amritsar and staying with the Guru for a number of days to render seva (service) in the community projects taken in hand by the Guru such as the completion of the tank of Amritsar and then the temple

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51. Sarup Dass Bhalla, Mahima Parkash, (Patiala: Bhasha Vibhag, 1971), p. 346; Sahib Singh, a reknowned theologian, also mentions that Guru Amar Das started the institution of langar at Chak Ram Das Pura regularly under the supervision of Baba Budha for those Sikhs who were rendering service in the excavation of amritsrovar, the destitutes, and the other needy persons without any distinction of caste or creed. Sahib Singh, Jeevan Virtant Sri Guru Ram Das Ji, (Amritsar: Singh Brothers, 1968), pp. 56-57.

52. Jeevan Virtant Sri Guru Arjan Dev Ji, op.cit., p.18.

Harimandir. He, therefore, wanted to raise the langar institution on <sup>a</sup> permanent footing and organize it regularly round the clock to meet the growing demand of the working sangats and those coming from distant places at odd hours lest any body should sleep without any food. But this mission of the Guru required huge financial resources of the Sikh church and could no longer be depended upon the voluntary offerings of the sangat which often varied from time to time and season to season.

With this purpose in view, Guru Arjan sought self-reliance and financial independence of the Sikh church by organizing the institution of masand and exhorted his followers to donate one tenth of their income (daswandh) to the Sikh church annually which resulted in replenishing the treasury of the Guru. Because of increase in the financial resources of the Guru, according to Gokul Chand Narang, "the Guru could now arrange his budget, with much more certainty, as the dues of the Guru were paid more readily and unfailingly than even the Mughal revenues."<sup>53</sup> He could allocate a portion of the budget on langar institution out of the entire resources of the church and could organize and enlarge a free community mess or (langar) regularly on permanent basis as is evident from the authority of Twarikh Guru Khalsa

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53. Gokul Chand Narang, Transformation of Sikhism, op.cit., p.43.

that in Guru Arjan's langar "good quality of food was served to the Sikhs, sadhus and the poor and the langar was made available to sangat day and night (eight pahar)<sup>54</sup> and none could go or sleep empty stomach. This tradition of langar institution became an integral part of the gurdwara institution for all times to come.

With the elaboration and enlargement of langar activity under Guru Arjan Dev, we may witness a significant shift in the organisational aspect of the langar, though the functions such as procuring of wood for the kitchen, cooking, cleaning utensils, water service and serving food remained as part of seva or service, yet Guru Arjan employed some persons for the domestication of animals<sup>55</sup> for the procurement of milk or butter which speaks of introduction of element of officialization in the organisational aspect of the langar institution because of enlargement and elaboration in the scope of the langar activity.

Guru Arjan was the first Sikh Guru who while addressing his Sikhs like Bhai Bahlo advised them to provide personal langar at their places and serve food to

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54. Twarikh Guru Khalsa, op.cit., p.367.

55. Bhai Santokh Singh, op.cit. Ras 4, Ansu 23, p.2320.

the Sikhs, sadhus and other guests in the name of the Guru without having any pride for doing such work.<sup>56</sup> It is stated that Bhai Bahlo complied with the instructions of Guru Arjan Dev by serving langar to the Sikhs and other guests and none could go empty stomach.<sup>57</sup> It denotes that Guru Arjan made serving of langar to the humanity as a service to God and made it an essential constituent of simran for the salvation. A tradition of providing food (langar) to the Sikhs on important Sikh occasions or (gurpurabs) is also witnessed during the time of Guru Arjan Dev by his followers as is evident from the sakhi of Bhai Budhu Shah mentioned in Mahima Prakash.<sup>58</sup> But while providing such a langar in the name of Guru they were cautioned that the food is served alike to all present to their fill without any discrimination, and no body should

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56. Sarup Dass Bhalla, op.cit., p.319.

57. Ibid.

58. Bhai Budhu traded in bricks at Lahore. He offered langar in the name of Guru and large number of Sikh sangat assembled and took langar to their fill after the recitation of kirtan and ardas for seeking blessings that he is applying fire to the bricks in his Kiln which he turned burnt (pucca). After the departure of sangat, there came another guest who demanded food from Budhu Shah but he did not care to feed him to his fill because he did not come in time and instead arrived when everything was over. Consequently the hungry guest cursed him saying awa kacha (unburnt) and it goes the story that when bricks were released from the kiln they were actually found unburnt.  
See: Sarup Dass Bhalla, op.cit., pp. 355-356.

go without taking food (empty stomach) otherwise the purpose for which it had been provided was considered to be defeated and the occasion or the gurpurab was not considered complete.

It may also be pointed out that Guru Arjan also made simran and seva as two major constituents of the visiting Sikhs to the gurdwara. Apart from the participation in the religious congregations of the Sikhs for the recitation of nam, meditation and prayer for salvation, they were to participate in the community projects and the guru-ka-langar, and consequently these "two major constituents", in the words of Fauja Singh, emerged as "the daily routine of the visiting Sikhs."<sup>59</sup> Thus the institution of langar under Guru Arjan Dev emerged as an enduring subsidiary institution of the basic institution of the gurdwara, which began to play<sup>a</sup> much wider role in the life of adherents as it also incorporated in its functions the providing of food, opportunity for service and dan.

#### Masand:

The sangat or the Sikh followers of the Guru spread far and wide were organized into manjis which, it is believed, developed into an institution called the masand. A Persian

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59. Fauja Singh, loc. cit., p. 17.

word, masnad literally means exalted or raised high (high seat). On the authority of Dabistan, one can say that the use of the word started with the Afghan Kings who "addressed their nobles as Masnad-i-Ali and subsequently by frequent use the phrase got reduced it to merely Masand."<sup>60</sup> Thus in the opinion of Ganda Singh, the word masand is more or less a synonym of Panjabi word manji or cot i.e. masnad (high seat) which the missionaries used while preaching to the congregation squatting on the floor or carpet.<sup>61</sup>

Tracing the origin of manji system, Teja Singh, on the basis of old Janam Sakhi<sup>62</sup> has observed that during the period of Guru Nanak "the Sikh sangats or congregations were scattered all over India, even outside, and the centres of preachings, appointed by him were called manjis."<sup>63</sup> He also mentions the names of the prominent manji holders and according to him Bhai Lallo was preaching in the north and Sheikh Sajjan in

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60. Dabistan, Extract translated in English "Guru Nanak and Nanak Panthis", by Ganda Singh, published in Panjab Past & Present, ed. Ganda Singh, Vol. III, 1969, p. 52.

61. Ibid., f.n. 52.

62. Old Janam Sakhi in the Indian Office, London (Colebrook), p. 169, cf. Teja Singh, loc. cit., p. 137.

63. Ibid.,



the South West of Punjab, Gopal Dass was in Benaras, Jhanda Badi in Bushair, Budhan Shah in Kirtpur, Mahi in Mahisar, Kaljug, a priest's son in Jagganath Puri, Devlut in Lushai (Tibet), Salis Rai in Patna and Behar, Raja Shivnath in Ceylon and host of other workers were scattered over the whole territory visited by Guru Nanak in and outside India.<sup>64</sup> This is evident that Guru Nanak appointed those persons as incharge of centres which had emerged as congregations or Sikh sangats. They were known as the manji or the manji holders.<sup>65</sup>

Under the prevailing situation, it seems that some of the centres of the sangats as established by Guru Nanak Dev at distant places outside Panjab would have become disfunctional and irregular in their mission for which they were created. With a view to consolidating the Sikh sangats Guru Amar Das reorganised the manji system into twenty two manjis,<sup>66</sup> each under a trusted preacher appointed by the Guru. They regularly addressed their respective sangats called sangtia; and under Guru Arjan Dev they were called

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64. Teja Singh, op.cit., p.37.

65. Bhagat Singh, Sikh Polity in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries, (New Delhi: Oriental Publishers & Distributors, 1978), p.25.

66. Teja Singh, op.cit., p. 66.

67. Ibid.,; Sahib Singh, op.cit., p.34; Indubhushan Banerjee, op.cit., pp. 168 & 257; H.R. Gupta, op.cit., p. 277.

upon to collect offerings from the Sikhs at the rate of one tenth of their income called daswandh and their status was raised to masands.<sup>68</sup> Supporting this view, Indubhushan Banerjee states that with the introduction of this reform by Guru Arjan "the Manji System underwent a change and the bishops did not remain purely spiritual guides but became collectors of tithe as well".<sup>69</sup> However, it is held by some writers and historians on the authority of Twarikh Guru Khalsa which refers to the presence of twelve masands who were invited to attend the coronation ceremony of the fifth Guru, Arjan Dev on Bhadon Sudi 1, 1638 B.K. (1581 A.D.)<sup>70</sup> believe, that the masand institution was introduced by the

68. H.R. Gupta, op.cit., p. 90 & 277.

69. Indubhushan Banerjee, op.cit., p. 260; This fact is also affirmed by W. Owen Cole and Piara Singh Sambhi when it is mentioned that the sangatia first appointed by the third Guru was now (Arjan's time) was called masand. See: The Sikhs, Their Religious Beliefs and Practices (New Delhi: Vikas Publishing House Pvt. Ltd., 1978, p. 35); Bhagat Singh also traces the origin of the institution of masand in the manjis or dioceses of Guru Amar Das when he writes that "these dioceses latter on proved very powerful agencies for collection of daswandh which were remitted to the Guru's headquarter for the various projects of the community". For detail see: op.cit., p.260.

70. Bhai Gian Singh Ji Giani, op.cit., p. 357, 359; Macauliffe also attribute this institution to Guru Ram Das. This view is supported by many scholars such as Teja Singh and Ganda Singh, and Sahib Singh when they write that from the days of Guru Ram Das the work of conveying offerings was assigned to prominent missionaries called masands. For detail see: M.A. Macauliffe, op.cit., Vo. II, p. ; Teja Singh & Ganda Singh, A Short History of the Sikhs (Bombay: Orient Longmans, 1950), p. 27; Sahib Singh, op.cit., p. 20-21.

fourth Guru, Ram Das. It is argued that Guru Ram Das needed enormous financial resources to complete the new Sikh Centre Chak Ram Das Pur in the heart of Majha. He sent his trusted Sikhs to different places in addition to the twenty two manjis established by the third Guru to collect offerings from the faithfuls and transmitting to the Guru. The new preachers came to be popularly known as masands.<sup>71</sup> Evidently the masands were appointed since the time of Guru Ram Das who propagated gurbani organized sangats and led <sup>the</sup> Sikhs to their respective localities.<sup>72</sup>

Though Indubhushan Banerjee does not agree to the view that the masand system was in vogue during the time of Guru Ram Das, he is said to have sent agents throughout the country for the purpose of collecting contributions from his followers for the excavation of the tanks he had planned.<sup>73</sup> But as yet, he writes, the contributions were absolutely voluntary though it had become difficult to allow things to continue in an irregular manner.<sup>74</sup>

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71. Sahib Singh, op.cit., pp. 20-21.

72. Hardial Singh, "Arjan Dev da Saman te Samaj" Guru Arjan Vishesh Ank, Punjabi Dunia (Patiala: Bhasha Vibhag, July, 1953), p. 184.

73. Indubhushan Banerjee, op.cit., p.194.

74. Ibid.

But none of these writers, except Macauliffe, has cited any authority in support of his viewpoint. Macauliffe refers to Dabistan-i-Mazahib, which without any ambiguity assigns this institution to Guru Arjan Dev. It is clearly recorded therein that "before the Fifth Mahal (Guru), no bhet (offering) or tribute was collected from the Sikhs. Whatever was presented by the Sikhs themselves was accepted (and deemed enough). During his time, Arjan Mal deputed one person to the Sikhs of every city so that he might collect tribute and offerings from them. (This deputy or agent was called Masand)." <sup>75</sup> It is further recorded in Dabistan that the masands brought a large number of people into the fold of Sikhism. Successful as they were in the task, they appointed deputies on their own behalf, so that at every place and mahal (pargana), people having at first become meli (associates or pupils) of the masand through the masand's agents, became the Sikhs of the Guru. <sup>76</sup>

Similarly, Bhai Gurdas, a contemporary of the third, fourth and fifth Gurus does not record anything regarding the title of the masand before the time of fifth guru Arjan Dev. He furnishes a list of thirteen names of the chief masands of Guru Arjan in his eleventh Var. <sup>77</sup> The list of names is as follows:

75. Guru Nanak and Nanak Panthis, op.cit., p.52.
76. Ibid.
77. Varan Bhai Gurdas, op.cit., Var 11, Pauri 22, p.199.

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|-----|-------------|---|------------------------------|
| 1.  | Deepa       | { | He was Kasra by caste .      |
| 2.  | Bhai Lal    | { | They belonged to Patti       |
| 3.  | Bhai Langha | { | and were Dhillon by caste.   |
| 4.  | Ajaib       | { |                              |
| 5.  | Ajaeb       | { | They belonged to Sanghe Jāt. |
| 6.  | Umer Shah   | { |                              |
| 7.  | Paira       |   | He belonged to Chhajal Jāt   |
| 8.  | Kundu       |   | He belonged to Sangher Jāt   |
| 9.  | Kapoor Dev  |   |                              |
| 10. | Samman      |   | belonged to Shahbazpur       |
| 11. | Jodha       | { |                              |
| 12. | Jalo        | { | They belonged to Tulspur     |
| 13. | Mohan       |   | He belonged to Alamganj      |

It is thus evident from the account of Bhai Gurdas that masand institution or the title of masand was not introduced before the time of Guru Arjan Dev. Had this institution been in existence before the pontification of Guru Arjan, it could not have escaped the attention of Bhai Gurdas and would have had certainly mentioned alongwith the names of the Sikhs pertaining to the time of fourth Guru in Var eleventh pauri seventeenth under a separate

title "Masand Sikhs" of Guru Ram Dass as he had done in the case of Guru Arjan Dev.<sup>78</sup>

Thus from the above account we may conclude that the institution of masand emerged in embryonic form during the time of Guru Amar Das. It, however, was defined and organised by Guru Arjan Dev as is amply proved from the following features of the masand institution:

1. It was Guru Arjan who assigned the title of the masand to the missionaries who were sent to the Sikhs of every city to collect offerings from them.<sup>79</sup>
2. He converted the voluntary offerings into fixed one<sup>80</sup> and called upon the Sikhs to donate daswandh or one tenth of their income to the Guru's treasury for the community.<sup>81</sup>

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78. Hari Ram Gupta is also of the opinion that Macauliffe has wrongly attributed the institution of masand to fourth Guru Ram Das. Moreover, according to him, there was no need to appoint masands by Guru Ram Das as during his time, the number of Sikhs had considerably dwindled owing to Prithia's opposition. See: History of the Sikh Gurus, op.cit., p.89.
79. Guru Nanak and Nanak Panthis, op.cit., p. 52.
80. Gokul Chand Narang, op.cit., p.43; Dabistan (Persian) p. 233, c.f. H.R. Gupta, op.cit., p.90; Indubhushan Banerjee, op.cit., p. 195.
81. Mohinder Kaur Gill, Guru Arjan Dev, Jeevan te Bani, (Delhi: National Book Shop, 1975), p.34; Teja Singh and Ganda Singh, op.cit., p. 27; H.R. Gupta, op.cit., p. 90, Sahib Singh, op.cit., p.24.

3. There was a gradation in the organization of the masand as is evident from the Dabistan and the account of Bhai Gurdas which record about the title of chief masand. This was assigned to those masands, through whom <sup>a</sup>large number became the Sikhs of the Guru, and who appointed deputies on their own behalf.<sup>82</sup> And this fact is further clarified by Ibbetson that where the masands did not personally reside, they appointed their own delegates called sangatia or masandia.<sup>83</sup>

Thus it seems probable that some masands appointed their deputies at places which could not be covered by them personally and gave them the title of sangatia or masandia (their deputy). Their status was elevated to that of the masand under Guru Arjan Dev.<sup>84</sup> The main function of these deputies was to collect daswandh or tithe and hand over that money to the respective masands under whom they were working for depositing in the Guru's treasury.

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82. Guru Nanak and Nanak Panthis, op.cit., p. 52.
83. Ibbetson, Denzil Edward MacLagan & H.A. Rose, A. Glossary of Tribes & Castes of Panjab and North-West Frontier Province of India, (Lahore: Punjab Government Press, 1936), Vol. I, p. 682.
84. According to H.R. Gupta, Guru Arjan called upon sangatia to collect offerings from the Sikhs at the rate of one tenth of their income called daswandh. They were upgraded as masands or nobles. (History of the Sikh Gurus, p. 90); Indubhushan Banerjee also hold similar view that the status of sangatia was raised to masand under Guru Arjan. See: Evolution of of Khalsa, Vol. I, p.260.

It thus seems that there were the following three grades of the masand organization:

1. Chief Masand (Maheen Masand): According to Dabistan this title was given to those masands through whom large number became the Sikhs of the Guru, who appointed their deputies on their own behalf for catering to the spiritual needs of the Sikh sangats in their respective centres.<sup>85</sup> According to Bhai Gurdas their number was thirteen during the time of Guru Arjan.<sup>86</sup>
2. masand: This title was given to those missionaries who were hithertofore working as sangatias and concerned only with the imparting of spiritual instructions and the collection of daswandh within their respective dioceses or manjis.
3. sangatia or masandia: They were the deputies of the chief masands. During the time of Guru Arjan, the Sikh sangats were not confined to the twenty two dioceses as established by Guru Amar Das but were scattered over far off places like Kabul, Kandhar and Delhi. As such some masands might have had the charge of large territories which could not be covered by them personally due to lack of means of transportation in those times. Therefore, such masands

85. Guru Nanak and Nanak Panthis, op.cit., p.52.

86. Varan Bhai Gurdas, op.cit., Var 11, pauri 22, p.199



which presumably led to the appointment of trusted lieutenants known as sangatias to cater<sup>to</sup> the spiritual needs of the Sikh sangats and to collect the daswandh and transmitting to their respective chiefs, were popularly known as chief masands. It was obligatory on the part of these functionaries to maintain a written account of the daswandh and the Sikhs got the amount of daswandh recorded in the scrolls (bahis) in their presence. The masands assembled at the court of the Guru (Amritsar) to render the account of the offering on<sup>the</sup> Baisakhi day.<sup>87</sup>

The masands were not paid any salary. They retained a portion of the offering received by them with the approval of the Guru.<sup>88</sup> But as per authority of Dabistan, they did not misappropriate the daswandh for their own use. Other than this, whatever the Sikhs brought during the year, for the masand (himself) for conveying their offerings to the Guru, was spent for himself, if the masands had no other means of livelihood. But if he was engaged in some profession, he never soiled himself by misappropriating to himself the offerings of the Sikhs.<sup>89</sup>

There were many reasons, which necessitated an immediate change in the organizational aspect of manji system under Guru Arjan. A few of them are mentioned below:

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87. Sahib Singh, op.cit., p. 24; also see: Guru Nanak and Nanak Panthis, op.cit., p.53.

88. H.R. Gupta, op.cit., p. 90.

89. Guru Nanak and Nanak Panthis, op.cit., p.53.

- (i) During his time, the number of Sikhs had immensely increased and Sikhs were scattered over all the parts of Punjab and outside.<sup>90</sup> which made the task of collecting gifts from the followers difficult and very often their gifts (offerings) did not find way into the treasury of the Guru. Thus a change in the method of collection became imperatively necessary.<sup>91</sup>
- (ii) Prior to Guru Arjan's period, Fauja Singh points out, "The needs were limited and no special machinery was either required to set up for the collection, but from his time onwards they multiplied many<sup>^</sup>fold and in consequence the masand system was established".<sup>92</sup>
- (iii) The fifth Guru had also considerably widened the range of his activities and enterprises in construction of buildings, excavations of sarovars and baoli, and the construction of Harimandir, which later on emerged as the first gurdwara of the Sikh community. It required enormous funds to complete these projects.

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90. Guru Nanak and Nanak Panthis, op.cit., p.51; Varan Bhai Gurdas, Var Eleventh, pauri 26, p.203.

91. Indubhushan Banerjee, op.cit., p.194.

92. Fauja Singh, op.cit., p.5.

- (iv) On the nomination of Guru Arjan, Prithi Chand, the eldest brother of Guru Arjan became very hostile and his hostility reduced the Guru to great financial stringency so much so that it had even become very difficult to maintain the langar. Moreover, Arjan gave Prithia all his property including shops of batta, hatta which brought in a very rich income and for his personal maintenance and that of langar the Guru depended upon the offerings brought in cash and kind by the sangat. Being not satisfied, Prithia began to intercept the cash offerings coming to the Guru, through his clever agents. The Guru checked this misappropriation by appointing trustworthy men called the masands to collect the tithe from the Sikhs.<sup>93</sup>
- (v) It is stated by Santokh Singh that "Guru Arjan conceived the idea of building a temple in the midst of holy tank (Amritsarovar) while this tank was under construction."<sup>94</sup> After the start of the holy temple, it is reported that a very large number of Sikhs participated in the construction work and rendered service with utmost devotion as a

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93. M.L. Peace, op.cit., p.15.

94. Santokh Singh, op.cit., p. 1855.

part of their daily work.<sup>95</sup> The Guru-ka-langar was maintained and provided free food to such pilgrims as visited the Guru from far off places and to those who had been staying for months with the object of doing service.<sup>96</sup> This required enormous funds to meet the growing expenses.

- (vi) Moreover, Guru Arjan is stated to have employed some persons for the domestication of animals<sup>97</sup> for the procurement of milk. Thus a huge amount was needed to maintain the community langar on a large scale and the expenses to this effect were taken into consideration by the Guru before hand.
- (vii) Lastly, Guru Arjan must have had also estimated the expenses which were to be incurred on the maintenance of gurdwara which had emerged as an institution in 1604 A.D. Definite expenses were to be made on the gurdwara establishment i.e. the salary of the ragis etc.<sup>98</sup> and the other core staff of the gurdwaras.

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95. Ibid., p. 1859.

96. Ibid., p. 2320.

97. Ibid., p. 2320.

98. According to Sri Gurpartap Suraj Granth, Rs. 500/- were spent on the Rababi kharch (see: p. 2320).

Assessing the growing expenditure of the Sikh Church due to expanded activities, Guru Arjan Dev perceived that one-tenth of the contribution from <sup>the</sup> faithful would be sufficient to meet the expenses. For the collection, the well known Masand System, a system of administrative organization of the Sikh society... brought the appointment of a class of officials who were charged with the preaching of the faith and looking after the members of the community, but more importantly to collect the obligatory contribution of one-tenth of the income of all the members of the socio-religious community, which was originally voluntary one.”<sup>99</sup>

The masand institution has been interpreted by some historians from different angles. Some of them have attached political motives and believe that this institution was an attempt to make the Sikh community a political power or to convert the socio-religious movement of the Sikhs into a political movement. Indubhushan Banerjee considers this innovation more or less of revolutionary character and of far-reaching consequence,<sup>100</sup> because in the opinion of Gokul Chand Narang the Guru was viewed as the King (Sacha Padshah) and his masands as Masnad-i-Ali or His Excellencies, the title of Afghan nobles (Governors).<sup>101</sup> He further

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99. Niharanjan Ray, The Sikh Gurus and the Sikh Society, (Patiala: Punjabi University, 1970), p.38.

100. Indubhushan Banerjee, op.cit., p.195.

101. Gokul Chand Narang, op.cit., p.43, (f.n.)

points out that the Guru could now arrange his budget with much more certainty and the dues of the Guru were paid more readily and unfailingly than even the Mughal revenues.<sup>102</sup> Moreover, the Sikhs were gradually accustomed to a kind of Government of their own. It brought into their ranks cohesion.<sup>103</sup> Taking political view of the movement, Hari Ram Gupta, Indubhushan Banerjee and Gokul Chand Narang collectively hold the view that the Sikh community acquired the position of <sup>a</sup> separate state within the Mughal State.<sup>104</sup> But such writers seem to have failed to grasp the mission and the financial needs of the Guru, such as <sup>the</sup> excavation of tanks, construction of temples and founding of new towns and other preaching centres, <sup>the</sup> running of the lepers' house at Tarn Taran and feeding thousands of people from guru-ka-langar. Moreover, with this step <sup>the</sup> Guru attempted at promoting the spirit of donation (dan) and commitment among <sup>the</sup> Sikhs towards the entire brotherhood and the Sikh Church. His aim was to ensure the steady flow of funds to the central treasury which would be quite

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102. Ibid.

103. Ernest Trumpp, The Adi Granth, ed. tr. (London: Wm. H. Allen and Co., 1877) (Reprint), p.LXXXi.

104. H.R. Gupta, op.cit., p. 93; Indubhushan Banerjee, Evolution of Khalsa, (Calcutta: A. Mukherjee & Co. Pvt. Ltd., 1947), Vol. II, p. 1; Gokul Chand Narang, op.cit., p. 76.

sufficient to meet the demands of the growing church. And the title of masand which was assigned by Guru Arjan to his missionaries was not analogous to Masnad-i-Ali, a title used for the Afghan nobles, but it may be considered as the corrupted Panjabi form of the Persian word 'masnad' which means the exalted one. Since the masands were the deputies of the spiritual Guru (Sat-Guru), they were naturally to be assigned elevated status in the Sikh organization. It may also be pointed out that in the Sikh terminology masand was a title as well as an institution.<sup>105</sup> At the same time, they were living links and catered to the spiritual and secular needs of the Sikh sangats which were spread over a vast area. They were agencies for conveying the message or the hukamnamas from time to time. They were thus devised to be a two-way channel of communication between the Guru and the sangats. It was also a very important vehicle or agency through which the Guru could increase the number of his Sikhs as is evident from the Dabistan.<sup>106</sup>

At this stage of development of Sikh Church, one can not accept that the institution of the masands was an act to establish a state within a state. Had Guru Arjan any political motives in the collection of offerings from the Sikhs, the Mughal State would not have hesitated to put a

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105. H.R. Gupta, op.cit., p.277.

106. Guru Nanak and Nanak Panthis, op.cit., p. 52.

stop to this move. Moreover, such a political intention could not have escaped the attention of the author of Dabistan or any political authority. As there is nothing to support it, one can logically assert that the basic purpose of the Guru in organizing this institution was to replenish the depleting central treasury of the Sikh Church and the Sikh community, to mobilize its own resources, to cater to the needs of <sup>a</sup> large number of Sikhs spread over various parts of this country and outside it, and to strengthen and consolidate the scattered Sikh sangat.



## CHAPTER V

### SIKH PRACTICES

Thomas F.O'Dea while elaborating his theory, 'The Symbolic Dilemma: Objectification Versus Alienation' in the evolution of world religion suggests that, "The object of the apprehension of the sacred or the experience of the holy as well as the kinds of attitude involved of the adherents must be given some form of objectified expression if they are to survive the movements of such experiences themselves, especially, if they are to be communicated to others and transmitted from generation to generation".<sup>1</sup> It is in this perspective that we must grasp the creation of religio-social practices and rituals. After establishing institutions such as the object of worship, place of worship and association of worshippers, and elaborating some other allied institutions Arjan Dev wove a fabric of rituals around the Granth which have continued till today. Compilation of the Adi Granth in 1604 by Guru Arjan Dev, making it a sacred object of meditation and worship as it contained the Divine Word and its installation<sup>2</sup> was a great landmark in

1. Thomas F.O'Dea, "The Sociological Dillema: Five Paradoxes of Institutionalization", Man's Religious Quest, ed. Roy Whitefield (London: The Open University Press, 1978), p. 303.
2. According to Bhai Gian Singh, the Granth was formally installed in Harimandir Sahib on Bhadon Sudhi Ekam, 1661 BK. (August 1604 A.D.). For detail see: Twarikh Guru Khalsa, 2nd edn. (1892 rpt. Patiala: Bhasha Vibhag, 1970), p. 396.

this direction as it initiated a number of Sikh practices and most of them had taken the form of religious rituals which sociologically are "central to the organised religious life".<sup>3</sup> On the installation day which is celebrated as gurpurab i.e. an auspicious occasion, according to the Gur Bilas Patshahi Chhevin, when it was about one hour to dawn the holy Granth was brought in a procession on the head of Bhai Budha and Guru Arjan waved the chaur over it all time walking barefooted behind the aswari. The ragis (musicians) moved ahead of the procession reciting sabad kirtan (singing guru's hymns) followed by the sangat including Hargobind, the son of Guru Arjan.<sup>4</sup> But according to Sri Gur Pur Parkash Granth<sup>5</sup> a tradition acceptable to many reputed Sikh historians,<sup>6</sup> the Adi Granth on that occasion was brought to Harimandir in a <sup>a</sup>planquin (palki). This view is also supported by <sup>a</sup>very strong Sikh tradition of observance of the procedure in which great reverence had been shown to the bani even before the Adi Granth was compiled by Guru Arjan.

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3. Thomas F.O'Dea, op.cit., p.303.
  4. Sohan Kavi, Gur Bilas Patshahi Chhevin, (Patiala: Bhasha Vibhag, 1970), p.93.
  5. Kavi Sant Rain Prem Singh, Sri Gur Pur Parkash Granth, (Amritsar: Gyani Press, 1919), p. 664.
  6. Madanjit Kaur, The Golden Temple Past & Present, (Amritsar: Guru Nanak Dev University, 1983), p. 118; Teja Singh and Ganda Singh, A Short History of the Sikhs, Vol. I, 1950, p. 30.

According to the Sikh tradition, Guru Arjan Dev brought the manuscripts (pothis) from Baba Mohan from Goindwal to Amritsar in a <sup>a</sup>planquin with utmost devotion walking barefooted behind it.<sup>7</sup> Similarly Bhai Banno brought the bir of Sri Guru Granth Sahib from Amritsar to his village Mangat with utmost reverence in the palki.<sup>8</sup> In view of this popular tradition, it seems very probable that, as before, the <sup>a</sup>planquin was used for bringing the aswari of the Granth to the Harimandir. The Granth was placed under a canopy in the central hall inside the temple on the manji<sup>9</sup> at the ~~rostrum~~ meant for it. The sangat sat around it on the floor and Guru Arjan Dev sat on a lower level beside the Granth. Asa-di-Var was then recited and after the completion of which, Guru Arjan asked Bhai Budha to open the Granth at random and read out the yak (a brief verse of guidance from the holy scripture) to the congregation.<sup>10</sup> It was one hour to dawn when Guru Arjan asked Bhai Budha to do so.<sup>11</sup> Bhai Budha opened the Granth with great esteem and deep devotion and read out the yak

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7. Bhai Santokh Singh, Sri Gurpartap Suraj Granth, ed. Bhai Vir Singh, 4th edn. (1929 rpt. Amritsar: Khalsa Samachar, 1963), p. 2062.
  8. Gur Bilas Patshahi Chhevin, op.cit., pp. 59-60
  9. Sant Rain Prem Singh, op.cit., p. 666.
  10. Bhai Santokh Singh, op.cit., Ras 3, Ansu 5, p. 2143.
  11. Gur Bilas Patshahi Chhevin, op.cit., p. 93.

loudly which was acknowledged by the sangat with utmost concentration and respect bowing down their heads with folded hands.<sup>12</sup> In this manner, the holy Granth was for the first time installed in Harimandir Sahib and was introduced to the sangat. The installation day has now become a very important Sikh gurpurab and is celebrated with great religious enthusiasm and fervour.

Guru Arjan also appointed Bhai Budha as the first granthi (priest) of the Golden Temple to read out the holy scripture and to perform other services in the gurdwara,<sup>13</sup> and it may be pointed out that the holy Granth remained open throughout the day in the Harimandir sahib for the sight (darshan) and for paying obeisance of the sangat.<sup>14</sup> Then it was taken to its sukhasan (resting place).<sup>15</sup>

Guru Arjan Dev also fixed the daily routine about its prakash (daily installation) ceremony in Harimandir. According to Gur Bilas Patshahi Chhevin when it is three hours to the dawn, the ragis would start the service of the kirtan of Asa-di-Var inside the Harimandir. The Granth was brought to the temple from its resting place when it was about

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12. Ibid.

13. Kavi Sant Rain Prem Singh, op.cit., p. 666; Twarikh Guru Khalsa, op.cit., Vol. I, p. 397.

14. Gur Bilas Patshahi Chhevin, op.cit., p.93.

15. For details see: sukhasan ceremony.

one hour to the dawn.<sup>16</sup> This practice of bringing the Maharaj-ji-di-aswari<sup>17</sup> for parkash, as the ritual is popularly known, in the early hours of the morning has since then become a religious ritual not only in the Harimandir but also in all the other big gurdwaras of historical importance. Briefly, the tradition is meticulously observed even today when the aswari of the Granth Sahib enters the door of the sanctum sanctorum, the devotees place the palki on the floor. The kirtan is stopped. The granthi takes out the holy Granth, places it on his head, takes it inside the temple and lays it down on the restorom meant for it i.e., the manji sahib. The pushaka (the robes of the holy Granth) is changed and when all these ceremonies are over, the ragis resume the recitation of Asa-di-Var. After some time, the kirtan is stopped and the holy book is opened at random and yak is taken from the scripture. After the yak ceremony the recitation of the Asa-di-Var is resumed.<sup>18</sup>

Another significant practice which emerged during the time of Guru Arjan was the sukhasan ceremony of the

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16. Gur Bilas Patshahi Chhevin, op.cit., p. 96;  
Bhai Santokh Singh, op.cit., p. 2144.

17. Since the holy Granth was brought to the Harimandir and taken back to its resting place in the evening in a palquin (palki) in a procession at the accompaniment of the sabad kirtan and this process has been adopted as practice known as Maharaj-di-aswari.

18. Madanjit Kaur, op.cit., p. 122.

Adi Granth. On the Parkash Divas of the Granth in the Darbar Sahib, the sangat had the honour of having darshan (viewing) and paying obeisance to the Sabad Guru i.e. Granth throughout the day. At the time of sunset, Bhai Budha enquired from Guru Arjan about the place and time where and when the Granth was to be put to rest.<sup>19</sup> Guru Arjan asked Budha to recite Kirtan Sohila when it is one and a half jam<sup>20</sup> past night and put it to bed (sukhasan) in the Guru's rest-room (kothri).<sup>21</sup> Bhai Budha complied with the instructions of the Guru and after reciting Kirtan Sohila at the fixed time offered ardas. The Granth was taken back to its resting place for the night<sup>22</sup> the same way as it was brought to the shrine in the morning. According to Gur Bilas Patshahi Chhevin it was put to rest on a new bed and a new cot. It is interesting to note that Guru Arjan always slept by the side of the Granth on the lower plinth<sup>23</sup> indicating that he ascribed higher status to it than to the person of the guru. This practice continued till the beginning of the seventeenth century. After the construction of the Akal Takhat, the resting

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19. Bhai Santokh Singh, op.cit., Ras 3, Ansu 50, p. 2144.

20. One Jam is equal to three hours.

21. Gur Bilas Patshahi Chhevin, op.cit., p. 96.

22. Ibid.

23. Ibid., p. 96.

place of the holy Granth was transferred to a place inside it (kotha sahib).<sup>24</sup> This sukhasan ceremony resembles, in many details, <sup>to</sup> the practice the Hindus had developed with regard to the idols installed in their temples.<sup>25</sup> They treated the gods as human personifications of Supreme Lord (God).

The above contention is further confirmed by the Granth darbar isnan ceremony which emerged around the Granth during Guru Arjan's period. It consisted of <sup>the</sup> washing of Darbar Sahib premises and changing the pushaka spotless sheets on manji sahib (supporting cot), also called singhasan.<sup>26</sup> This is the raised place on which the Granth was kept. This practice of Granth darbar isnan has now become an elaborate religious ritual and its performance begins at 12 P.M. The washing of <sup>the</sup> temple floor is done with milk diluted with water taken from Har-ki-pauri. The floor is rubbed hard with towels. Separate towels are used for the interior and the exteriors of the temple. The outer parkarma of the Harimandir is washed with water from the holy tank. The milk and water washing of the interior of the shrine, to be precise of the apartment proper of the Guru Granth is collected in a bucket. The

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24. Madanjit Kaur, op.cit., p.118.

25. W. Owen Cole, Piara Singh Sambhi, The Sikhs, Their Religious Beliefs and Practices (New Delhi: Vikas Publishing House, 1978), p. 43.

26. Gur Bilas Patshahi Chhevin, op.cit., p.96.

devotees take handful of it by way of amrit (nectar). After this, new pushaka on manji sahib (singhasan) is spread. Thereafter, carpets and cloth sheets are spread for the sangat to sit on.<sup>27</sup> To impart religious character to the ritual of singing specific hymns from the holy scripture, appropriate to the occasion are recited all the time this service goes on.<sup>28</sup> All these ceremonies are completed before the opening of the gates<sup>29</sup> of Darshani Deohri. This Granth darbar isnan ceremony is in vogue almost in all the important historical gurdwaras.

A prayer is a significant aspect of the rituals, a practice evolved by all the religions. It is significant as well as essential because it not only helps in establishing a rapport between the devotee or follower and the Divine which is sometimes objectified but it also concretises ritualistically relationship of the members of the congregation with one another. The custom of offering prayer must have begun with the inception of Sikhism. But by the time of Guru Arjan, when places of worship had been organized and the Adi Granth, the definite book of faith, had been installed in the Harimandir, it became an established practice among the followers of the guru to assemble for the purpose of praying in congregation.<sup>30</sup>

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27. Madanjit Kaur, op.cit., pp. 120-121.

28. Ibid.

29. The doors of Darshani Deohri open at 3 A.M. and closed at 11 P.M. during summer and 10 P.M. in the winter.

30. Teja Singh, Sikhism, Its Ideals and Institutions, 5th edn. (1938 rpt. Amritsar: Khalsa Brothers, Mai Sewan, 1978), p. 127.



Familiar expression of the congregation prayer which seems to have originated during the time of Guru Arjan was the recitation of the verse<sup>31</sup> recited by the sangat before the performance of the formal ardas. Though the exact form of expression of ardas at the time of Guru Arjan is not known yet it can be said with a degree of certainty that it was developed into an essential part of the ritual of worship. At this ceremony each member of the sangat was required to stand silently with folded hands<sup>32</sup> while one of them, man or woman, whosoever was a Sikh offered the formal prayer which is popularly known as ardas. But there are indications that during the time of Guru Arjan, the ardas was offered in the Harimandir after the recitation of Kirtan Sohila before the the aswari of the Adi Granth was taken to its resting place

31. ਤੂ ਠਾਕਰੁ ਤੁਮ ਪਹਿ ਅਰਦਾਸਿ ॥  
ਜੀਉ ਪਿਛੁ ਸਭਿ ਤੇਰੀ ਰਾਸਿ॥  
ਤੁਮ ਮਾਤ ਪਿਤ ਹਮ ਬਾਰਿਕ ਤੇਰੇ॥  
ਤੁਮਰੀ ਕ੍ਰਿਪਾ ਮਹਿ ਸੁਖ ਘਨੇਰੇ॥  
ਕੋਈ ਨਾ ਜਾਨੈ ਤੁਮਰਾ ਅਤਿ॥  
ਚੁੰਦੇ ਤੇ ਚੁੰਦਾ ਭਗਵੰਤ॥  
ਸਗਲ ਸਮਗ੍ਰੀ ਤੁਮਰੇ ਸੂਤ੍ਰਿ ਧਾਰੀ॥  
ਤੁਮਰੇ ਹੋਇਸੁ ਆਗਿਆਕਾਰੀ॥  
ਤੁਮਰੀ ਗਤਿ ਮਿਤਿ ਤੁਮਰੀ ਜ ਨੀ॥  
ਨਾਨਕ ਦਾਸ ਸਦਾ ਕੁਰਬਾਨੀ॥੪॥੪॥  
Adi Granth, Gauri, M.5, p.268.
32. ਦੋਇ ਕਰ ਜੋੜ ਕਰੇ ਅਰਦਾਸ।  
Ibid., Parbhati M.5, p.1340.

(sukhasan).<sup>33</sup> But by the time of the Sixth Guru Hargobind the form of expression of ardas was to invoke the names of the first five Gurus.<sup>34</sup> The familiar expression of prayer began to accumulate until by the time of Guru Gobind Singh, a definite form was given to it.<sup>35</sup> This form of ardas was again revised and some additions and alterations were made by the Shiromani Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee at the recommendations of the advisory religious committee on 3rd February, 1945.<sup>36</sup> This form of ardas i.e. the prayer invoking the Almighty's benedictions is now made six times a day at the Harimandir.<sup>37</sup> With a powerful cultural-element of continuity, it may safely be premised that it must have begun during Guru Arjan's period. As the practice goes now, the first ardas is performed immediately after the formalities in connection with the arrival of the Granth in the Harimandir are completed, i.e. in the small hours of the morning. It follows the recitation of Anand Sahib. Its special feature is

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33. Gur Bilas Patshahi Chhevin, op.cit., p.96.

34. ਤਹਿ ਬੁਝੈ ਅਰਦਾਸ ਉਚਾਰੀ। ਪਥੁ ਗੁਰੂਨਿ ਨੈ ਨਾਮ ਆਗੀ॥ 29॥  
Bhai Santokh Singh, op.cit., Ras 5, Ansu 8, p. 2544.

35. Teja Singh, op.cit., pp. 127-128.

36. Sikh Rehat Maryada, (Amritsar: Shiromani Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee, n.d.) p.3.

37. Madanjit Kaur, op.cit., p.127.

that it seeks benediction for the tenderers of karah prasad, (presentation) which is distributed among the sangat after the ardas has been said. The second ardas is performed on the completion of recitation of Asa-di-Var which is followed by third at 12 noon, when ragis finish the recitation of Anand Sahib. The fourth prayer is offered at 3 P.M., when the ragis (musicians) finish the recitation of the Charan Kamal Arati. The fifth ardas is offered in the evening after the recitation of Sodar Rahiras. The sixth, forming the last of the day, is performed after the recitation of kirtan Sohila, i.e. towards the closing hour of the temple service and before the holy Granth is taken in a procession to its retiring room in the Akal Takhat.<sup>38</sup> This elaborate routine of prayers is in vogue in such important historical gurdwaras like the Harimandir. At least two ardasas are offered in the gurdwaras which are located in the remote corners of the countryside i.e. first in the morning and the second in the night after the Kirtan Sohila just before the Adi Granth is put to sukhasan. Besides, the congregation ardas which is made in the gurdwaras, Guru Arjan had also exhorted his followers to perform individual prayers in a particular manner after performing ones daily religious routine<sup>39</sup>

38. Ibid., p.127.

39. ਨਿਤੁ ਉਠਿ ਗਾਵਹੁ ਪੜ ਕੀ ਬਾਣੀ। ਆਠ ਪਹਿਰ ਹਰਿ ਸਿਮਰਹੁ ਪ੍ਰਾਣੀ।  
ਦੁਇ ਕਰ ਜੋੜਿ ਕਰੀ ਅਰਦਾਸਿ। ਸਦਾ ਜਪੇ ਨਾਨਕੁ ਗੁਣ ਤਾਸੁ।  
Adi Granth, Parbhati, M.5, p. 1340.

(recitation of bani). Thus prayer became an essential part and continues to be of divine worship <sup>40</sup> both at home and in the gurdwara for the Sikhs.

### Kirtan

In Sikhism, the kirtan has acquired a prominent place which consists of <sup>the</sup> singing of the bani on Indian classical musical notes. In the medieval religio-literary idiom, Guru Arjan explained the significance of kirtan as the foremost and the best mode of bhakti in the Kal-Age (Dark Age) for salvation.<sup>41</sup> Metaphorically, he says that a small hut in which praises of Almighty are sung is a far beautiful place than a grand palace in which the residents have forgotten their Lord.<sup>42</sup> He regards them as the blessed who sing in praise of the Almighty and realize Him in the company of the saints,<sup>43</sup> and those who spare their time

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40. Harsimran Kaur, "Psychology of Prayer", Journal of Studies in Sikhism and Comparative Religion, Vo. III, No. 2, 1984, p.9.

41. ਕਲਿਜੁਗ ਮਹਿ ਕੀਰਤਨੁ ਪਰਧਾਨ॥ ਗੁਰਮੁਖਿ ਜਪੀਐ ਲਾਇ ਧਿਆਨਾ ॥  
ਆਪ ਤਰੈ ਸਗਲੇ ਕੁਲ ਤਾਰੇ॥ ਹਰਿ ਦਲਾਹ ਪਤਿ ਸਿਉ ਜਾਇਦਾ॥  
Adi Granth, Maru Sohila, M.5, pp. 1075-76.

42. ਭਲੀ ਸੁਹਾਵੀ ਛਾਪਰੀ ਜਾਮਹਿ ਗੁਨ ਗਾਏ।  
ਕਿਤਰੀ ਕਾਮ ਧਾਉਲਰ ਜਿਤ ਹਰਿ ਬਿਸਰਾਏ॥  
Ibid., Suhi, M.5, p. 745.

43. ਵਡੈ ਭਾਗਿ ਪੁਰ ਕੀਰਤਨੁ ਗਾਇਆ। ਸਤਿ ਸਗਿ ਨਾਨਕ ਪੁਰ ਪਾਇਆ।  
Ibid., Bilawal, M.5, p. 805.

from their worldly pursuits for this purpose.<sup>44</sup> The congregational singing involves both the singer and the listener in terms of participation, Guru Arjan therefore ascribed equal importance to both<sup>45</sup> as both, in his opinion, expiate the pollution of mind and thought, and by bringing man nearer to God, it helps him in his deliverance.<sup>46</sup>

It makes the individual worthy of place in Gods' presence.<sup>47</sup> Gurdwara being the central place of worship was made into a place for kirtan. Guru Arjan has, therefore, exhorted his Sikhs to visit the gurdwara for singing and listening to the kirtan in praise of God.<sup>47</sup> In view of the spiritual significance of the kirtan, Guru Arjan while specifying the religious routine of Granth darbar (the Harimandir) made kirtan as an essential ritual. According to Gur Bilas Patshahi Chhevin, Guru Arjan prescribed that the religious routine of the Harimandir should start with the service of

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44. ਭਲੇ ਭਲੇ ਰੇ ਕੀਰਤਨੀਆ ॥ ਰਾਮ ਰਾਮ ਰਾਮ ਗੁਨ ਗਾਉ।  
ਛੋੜਿ ਮਾਇਆ ਕੇ ਧੰਧ ਸੁਆਉ।  
Ibid., Ramkali, M.5, p. 885.

45. ਵੈਰ ਵਿਰੋਧ ਮਿਟੈ ਤਿਹ ਮਨ ਤੇ।  
ਹਰਿ ਕੀਰਤਨੁ ਗੁਰਮੁਖਿ ਜੋ ਸੁਨਤੇ।  
Ibid., Slok Gauri Ki Var, p. 259.

46. ਸੁਣਿ ਕੀਰਤਨ ਸਾਧ ਪਇ ਜਾਹਿ ਜਨਮ ਮਰਣ ਕੀ ਤ੍ਰਾਸ ਮਿਟਾਇ।  
Ibid., Gauri M. 5, p. 190.

47. ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰੇ ਹਰਿ ਕੀਰਤਨੁ ਸੁਣੀਐ। ਸਤਿਗੁਰ ਭੇਟਿ ਹਰਿ ਜਸੁ ਮੁਖਿ ਭਈਐ।  
ਕਲਿ ਕਲੇਸ ਮਿਟਾਏ ਸਤਿਗੁਰੁ, ਹਰਿ ਦਰਗਾਹ ਦੇਵੇ ਮਾਨਾਹਿ।  
Ibid., Maru Sohila, M.5, p. 1075.

the kirtan when it was three hours to dawn.<sup>48</sup> During the day, kirtan service should go on continuously at the temple except katha at some time. From the very beginning, there has been a practice of holding last kirtan chauki at night which used to start at three hours after the sunset known as 'kanra chauki,'<sup>49</sup> which lasted upto the recitation of Kirtan Sohila,<sup>50</sup> and the daily kirtan routine ends with it. This routine of Granth darbar has become<sup>an</sup> essential religious practice (ritual) and now kirtan starts one hour after the opening of the gates of Darshani Deohri in the early morning. It is followed by the recitation of Asa-di-Var which goes on till the sun rises. At 12.00 in the noon the ragis recite Anand Sahib. At 3.00 P.M. the charan kamal arati is performed. From 5.00 to 6.15 P.M., the ragis recite the Sodar through kirtan, and from 6.45 to 8.00 P.M., they perform arati (prayer). After the evening prayer, the kirtan is again resumed and goes on till 9.45 P.M.<sup>51</sup> Thus we find that the kirtan service has become an essential religious ceremony, nay a religious ritual not only in the Harimandir but in all the important

48. ਏਕੁ ਜਾਮੁ ਨਿਸੁ ਜਬੁ ਰਹਿ ਜਾਏ ॥ ਰਾਗੀ ਆਇ ਵਾਰ ਈਰਾਂ ਨਾਇ ॥  
Gur Bilas Patshahi Chhevin, op.cit., p. 96.

49. 'Kanra Chauki' means those ragas which could be only recited during the first pahar (three hours) of the night.

50. Gur Bilas Patshahi Chhevin, op.cit., p.96.  
 The holding of Kanra Chauki is also supported by Gur Partap Suraj Granth before recitation of Kirtan Sohila when it was one and a half jam past night, Ras 3, Ansu 50, p. 2144.

51. Madanjit Kaur, op.cit., p. 14. It may, however, be pointed out that the use of the word arati may not be confused with the Hindu system of arati performed with the lighted lamps. The author perhaps refers to simple prayer through kirtan when she used the phrase charan kamal arati.

gurdwaras and the kirtan service is done atleast in the morning and evening before the recitation of the Sohila.<sup>\*</sup>

#### The Jot

Guru Arjan Dev also established the practice of the lighting of gheefed lamp inside the Harimandir since the day of installation of the Adi Granth.<sup>52</sup> This practice is still in vogue even though the temple stands fully equipped with electricity. The pure-ghee lamp is lighted daily before the commencement of Rahiras and is extinguished in the morning after the recitation of Asa-di-var. Thus the custom of keeping the specific lamp burning continues as an important ritual.<sup>53</sup> This tradition, has also become a part of the Sikh way of life at the time of akhand path of the Adi Granth and akhand jot is burnt for three days.

#### Parkarma

The practice of performing parkarma was also started by Guru Arjan. After the installation of Granth, the Harimandir emerged as the first Sikh gurdwara. Guru Arjan made it his routine to have four parkarmas around the temple after performing his prayer at the Harimandir and a parkarma of Ram Das Sarovar (Amritsar) on his way back.<sup>54</sup>

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\* The proper name of the composition given in the Adi Granth is Sohila but in popular usage the word kirtan is prefixed to it.

52. Gur Bilas Patshahi Chhevin, op.cit., p. 96.

53. Madanjit Kaur, op.cit., p. 125.

54. Gur Bilas Patshahi Chhevin, op.cit., p. 113.

The tradition of circumambulating around the temple was also maintained by his son and successor, Guru Hargobind.<sup>55</sup> This practice of parkarma has also become a religious ritual with the Sikhs and there is a living tradition of one parkarma around the gurdwara and the sarovar among the Sikhs. According to Sikh Rehat Maryada, the parkarma should be performed in a clock-wise direction i.e. keeping the Granth and the gurdwara on right hand side.<sup>56</sup>

#### Family Rituals and Customs:

Besides the rituals concerning the place of worship and the object of worship, the more significant aspect of an organized religion is to regulate social life of its members by ritualizing social activities and symbolically integrating its members with the institution. Sociologically it marks the beginning, in the lives of the Sikhs, or assumption of an independent identity in terms of family rituals which were till then governed by the traditional brahmanical ritualistic pattern. With the compilation of the Adi Granth and its formal installation at the Harimandir, Sahib, it was now

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55. Bhai Santokh Singh, op.cit., Ras 4, Ansu 15, p. 2285.

56. Sikh Rehat Maryada, op.cit., p.16. It may be logically presumed that the practice of parkarma seems to have originated in the earth's movement around the sun symbolizing the deity in the case of the Hindus and Adi Granth in case of the Sikhs. It is, therefore, the nucleus or the axis around which a Sikh circumambulates.



possible for the Sikhs to evolve family rituals around the Granth in the gurdwara and thus making it the focal point of all the important events of Sikh life.<sup>57</sup>

In all probability, the ceremonies and rituals connected with the birth of a child in the family, began to evolve during Guru Arjan's period. A great poet, the Guru composed a thanks giving hymn at the time of the birth of his son Hargobind. It provides a reasonable ground to believe that family alongwith the mother and the newly born child after a certain period of confinement visit the gurdwara and recite the thanks-giving hymn composed by Guru Arjan. Then six pauris of Anand are recited, ardas is offered and the krah parda is distributed to the sangat.

Marriage is another significant event in the family which was institutionalized by Guru Arjan Dev for the Sikhs. He was the first Guru who originated Anand form of marriage on the occasion of the marriage of his son Hargobind. This marriage took place on 7th Magh, 1661 B.K. (January 1605 A.D.) at the village Dalla with Dmodari Ji, the daughter of Narain Das.<sup>58</sup>

57. These days the namkaran, marriage and death ceremonies are performed at its direction. Even when a family moves into a new house or at the time of opening a new business premises, the holy Granth is brought and bani suitable to the occasion is read and ardas is offered suitable to the occasion, and krah prasad is distributed.

58. M.A. Macauliffe, The Sikh Religion, Its Gurus, Sacred Writings and Authors, 2nd edn. (Indian) 1909 rpt. New Delhi: S. Chand and Co., 1972), Vol. III, p. 77.; also see: Gur Bilas Patshahi Chhevin, pp. 100 & 102.

Sant Rain Prem Singh, the author of Gur Pur Parkash Granth has mentioned in detail this Anand marriage and according to him, the bride and bridegroom seated themselves in front of the Adi Granth. The bride seated herself on the left side of the bridegroom. The concept of Sikh marriage was explained to them and the couple assented to the marriage by bowing before the Granth.<sup>59</sup> After this, the bride's father was called who came forward and gave the end of the scarf of the bridegroom hanging around his shoulders in the hand of his daughter.<sup>60</sup> The symbolic ceremony of union (palla pakrana) has now become a permanent ceremony of the Anand marriage which is done at the recitation of suitable hymn meant for the purpose.<sup>61</sup> Then the priest on tabe of the

59. ਪ੍ਰਤਕਾਲ ਸ੍ਰੀ ਗੁਰ ਉਠੇ ਕੀਨੇ ਸੋਚ ਸਠਾਨ॥ ਲਾਯੋ ਅਧਕ ਦਿਵਾਨ ਤਬ ਦਿਵਸ  
ਪੁਨਿਆ ਜਾਨ॥ 1॥ ਸਭੇ ਜਨੇਤੀ ਤਬ ਚਲ ਆਏ॥ ਹਰਗੋਬਿੰਦ ਵਿਚ ਸੋਭਾ ਪਾਇ॥...  
ਗ੍ਰੰਥ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਕੇ ਅਗ੍ਰਾ ਤਦਾਇ॥ ਸ੍ਰੀ ਹਰਿ ਗੋਬਿੰਦ ਜੀ ਬੈਠਾਇ॥ 5॥ ਨਰਾਇਨ  
ਦਾਸ ਸੁਤਾ ਦਿਸ ਬਾਵੀ॥ ਬਠਲਈ ਬਹੁ ਸੋਭਾ ਪਾਈ॥.।.।

Kavi Sant Rain Prem Singh, op.cit., pp. 681-82; The authors of Gur Bilas Patshahi Chhevin (p. 109) and Sri Gurpartap Suraj Granth (p. 2276) also make a specific mention of the word 'lavan' for solemnizing the marriage of Guru Hargobind.

60. ਤਬਹਿ ਨਰਾਇਨ ਦਾਸ ਬਲਾਯੋ॥ ਸੁਤਾ ਹਸਤ ਹਰਿ ਗੋਬਿੰਦ ਦਾਯੋ॥  
ਸ੍ਰੀ ਹਰਿਗੋਬਿੰਦ ਕੇਰ ਦੂਕਨ॥ ਸ੍ਰੀ ਦਮੋਦਰੀ ਕਰ ਦਯੋ ਮੁਲਾ॥

Ibid., p. 682.

61. ਕਰ ਗਹਿ ਲੀਨੀ ਸਾਜਨਹਿ ਜਨਮ ਜਨਮ ਕੀ ਮੀਤ,  
ਚਰਨਹਿ ਦਾਸੀ ਕਰ ਲਈ ਨਾਨਕ ਪਹੁ ਹਿਤ ਚੀਤ।  
ਉਸਤਿਤਿ ਨਿਦਾ ਨਾਨਕ ਜੀ ਮੈਂ ਹਉ ਵੇਝਾਈ, ਛੋਡਿਆ ਹਉ ਕਿਝੁ ਤਿਆਗੀ,  
ਸਭੇ ਸਾਕ ਕੁੜਾਵੈ ਡਿਠੇ, ਤਉ ਪਠੈ ਤੇਝੇ ਲਗੀ।

Adi Granth, Ramkali, M.5, p. 963.

holy Granth opened the Granth and read<sup>out</sup> the first lavan<sup>62</sup> which was recited by the ragis and the couple completed the first circle (lavan) around the Granth slowly, the groom leading the bride. The couple resumed their seats on its completion after bowing before the Granth. The same course was followed in the remaining three lavan.<sup>63</sup> After the completion of fourth lavan, there was a singing of the Anand<sup>64</sup> and followed by ardas (prayer) and distribution of sweet consecrated pudding to the congregation.<sup>65</sup>

Since then this form of marriage has been observed among the Sikhs and is recorded in the Rehatnama<sup>66</sup> and Sikh Rehat Maryada<sup>67</sup> popularly known as Anand Marriage. It was

62. Four lavan were composed by the fourth Guru Ram Das at the time of marriage of his daughter. According to Gurmat Sudhakar, the bride and the bridegroom are to complete four lavan (circles) round the holy Granth one after the other when the same is read by the Granthi (officiate) and recited by the ragis.
63. ਬੇਠੇ ਤਾਬਕਾ ਗੁਬੀਰਿ ਭਾਈ॥ ਪਰੀ ਲਵ ਪਿਥਮੇ ਸੁਖਦਾਈ॥  
ਸੋਈ ਲਵ ਪੁਨ ਰਾਗੀ ਗਾਵੈ॥ ਸ੍ਰੀ ਹਰਿਗੋਬਿੰਦ ਕਦਮ ਉਠਾਵੈ॥  
ਪਾਛੇ ਦਮੋਦਰ ਜਾਵੈ॥...॥ ਕੀਨ ਪ੍ਰਦਛਨਾ ਸਨਮੁਖ ਆਇ॥  
ਕੀਨ ਬੰਦਨਾ ਗੁਬੀ ਆਇ॥ ਜੁਗਮ ਤਿਤੀ ਚਤੁਰੀ ਰਿਹੈ॥  
Kavi Sant Rain Prem Singh, op.cit., p. 683.
64. Anand song was composed by Guru Amar Das at the birth of his grand son. This song is recited on all rejoicing days of the Sikhs.
65. Kavi Sant Rain Prem Singh, op.cit., p. 683.
66. Rehtnama Bhai Daya Singh, c.f. Giani Partap Singh, Gurmat Philosophy: Sikh Sanskar, Rehat Maryada ate Rehtname, (Amritsar: Khalsa Brothers, Bazar Mai Sewan, 1946), p. 485.
67. Sikh Rehat Maryada, op.cit., p. 25.

legalized later on by the government in 1909 by the 'Anand Marriage Act'. This form of marriage was not adopted as a measure to provide alternate form to that of the Hindu tradition, but to include in it the injunction which are exclusively Sikh as the four lavan<sup>68</sup> indicate the four stages of the Sikh way of life for the attainment of divine knowledge and complete union with God which is considered to be the highest goal of human life in Sikhism as it is analogous to the marriage of a bride with the bridegroom i.e. there is a complete fusion of her soul into the bridegroom's soul.

This form of marriage which originated during the period of Guru Arjan went a long way in creating a coherent Sikh community and discarded the four stages (ashrams) of the life of the Hindus. This form of marriage provided a symbolic meaning to the Sikhs for the attainment of Supreme bliss and the two activities of 'bhog' (worldly life) and 'mokh' (spiritual salvation) were integrated and this world became a paradise of Lord where he could behold Him, come face to face, hear the Divine music. On the other hand, the lavan

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68. According to Gobind Singh Mansukhani the first hymn (lavan) emphasis the duties of family life. The second hymn indicates the growth of love and awe. The third hymn lays stress on restraint or self improvement. The fourth hymn mentions the harmony of perfect equipoise or bliss... For detail see: Gobind Singh Mansukhani, The Quintessence of Sikhism (Amritsar: Shiromani Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee, 1985), p. 247.

ceremony which is the main part of the Anand form of marriage provided a unique status to the Adi Granth.

Being a fundamental reality, death means termination of life of an individual, hence a very sad event in the family. Among the Hindus there was a complex ritualism concerning the death ceremonies. Guru Arjan Dev however gave a different orientation in accordance with the tenets of Sikhism. Instead of mourning and indulging in unmanly loud lamentations like the traditional way of the Hindus, he initiated the ceremony of repeating the nam of the True Lord<sup>69</sup> at the death of his elder brother, Mahadev.<sup>70</sup> It is through this practice, Guru Arjan aimed at dispelling the ignorance of the people by equipping them with the divine knowledge that the soul is immortal and death is the decay of the elements of the body of which it is composed.<sup>71</sup> This practice (tradition) was reaffirmed by the fifth Guru in his parting message<sup>72</sup> to his son Hargobind. This has now become a part of Rehat Maryada

69. There is now a tradition of (singing) recitation of Sukhmani, (the Psalm of Peace), at the deathbed which was composed by Guru Arjan Dev.

70. 'ਧੰਨਧੰਨ' ਮੁਖ ਕਰਹਿ ਉਚਾਰਨਿ ਉਸਤਤਿ ਸੁਜਸੁ ਬਹੁਬਾਰਾ ਸਤਿਨਾਮ ਸਿਮਰਹਿ...  
Gurpartap Suraj Granth, op.cit., p. 2316.

71. ਪਵਨੈ ਮਹਿ ਪਵਨੁ ਸਮਾਇਆ, ਜੇਤੀ ਮਹਿ ਜੇਤਿ ਰਹਿ ਜਾਇਆ। ਮਾਟੀ ਮਾਟੀ ਹੋਇ  
ਏਕ॥ ਰੋਵਨੁ ਹਮਰੇ ਕੀ ਕਵਨੁ ਟੇਕ ॥ 2॥ ਬ੍ਰਹਮ ਗਿਆਨੀ ਮਿਲ ਕਰਹੁ ਵੀਚਾਰਾ  
ਇਹੁ ਤਉ ਚਲਿਤੁ ਭਇਆ। . . . ਕਹੁ ਨਾਨਕ ਗੁਰਿ ਭਰਮੁ ਚੁਕਾਇਆ।  
ਨਾ ਕੋਈ ਮਰੈ ਨ ਆਵੈ ਜਾਇਆ॥  
Adi Granth, Ramkali, M.5, p. 885.

72. Bid him not to mourn or indulge in unmanly lamentations but sing God's praise. Let him also restrain from grief the other members of the family. Macauliffe, op.cit., p.9.

(ii) ਕਰਹੁ ਨਾ ਮੋਕੁ ਗੇਵਿੰਦੁ ਗੁਣ ਗਾਵਹੁ।

Bhai Santokh Singh, op.cit., Ras 4, Ansu 40, p. 2395.

of the Sikhs not to indulge in loud lamentation at the time of death, but to sing songs in praise of the True Guru.<sup>73</sup>

With regard to the disposal of the dead bodies, Guru Arjan refers to several forms - cremation, burial and inhumation etc., but he does not subscribe to the sacredness of any of these forms for none reveals the fate of the deceased.<sup>74</sup> This explains why no definite form has been laid down for the Sikhs in this regard. A Sikh could perform the cremation ceremony of the deceased and where it is not possible, he could adopt any form other than cremation without any reservation and disbelief.<sup>75</sup> From the above tradition, it is safe to conclude that burial and inhumation are also permitted, and if cremation is desired in preference to other modes of disposal, it is based on health and sanitary considerations,<sup>76</sup> but it cannot be denied that cremation was the traditional practice of disposing off the dead bodies

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73. Sikh Rehat Maryada, op.cit., p.29.

74. ਉਤ ਜਾਇਕੋ ਧੂਮੁ ਬਾਦਰੋ ਇਕੁ ਭਾਜਰੁ ਰਾਮੁ ਸਨੇਹੀ। ਤੀਨਿ ਸਭਿਆ ਕਰਿ  
ਦੇਹੀ ਕੀਨੀ, ਜਨ ਕੁਕਰ ਭਸਮੇਹੀ॥ ਨਾਨਕ ਏਵੇ ਨ ਜਾਪਈ ਕਿਥੈ ਜਾਇ ਸਮਾਹਿ॥

Adi Granth, Sorath, M. 5, p. 609.

75. Sikh Rehat Maryada, op.cit., p. 29.

76. Bhai Kahan Singh, Gurmat Prabhakar, (Amritsar: Wazir Hind Press, 1912), p. 381.

among the Hindus. As all the Gurus and the other Sikhs were originally Hindus, they continued this practice.

The other important ceremony associated with death which was originated by Guru Arjan was the 'immersion ceremony' of the last remains of the deceased. He originated the practice of immersing the charred bones and the ashes of the dead body into the nearest river<sup>77</sup> instead of traditionally going to the river Ganges, the sacred place of the Hindus. While doing so, he not only dispelled the ignorance of the people but also simplified and made it less expensive and more convenient for the people. It has now become a permanent practice with the Sikhs to collect the charred bones and the ashes of the deceased and immerse the same in any river flowing nearer to their places.<sup>78</sup>

Guru Arjan's period is also significant in terms of imparting distinct form to the last rites of the deceased. The author of Gur Bilas Patshahi Chhevin, has given specific instructions to the Sikhs for holding the path of the Adi Granth in the memory of the deceased instead of performing the

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77. 'ਮਰਾਦੇਵ ਅਬਿ ਗਏ ਸਮਾਇ'  
ਦਿਵਸ ਤੀਸਰੇ ਪੁਸ਼ਪ ਭਸਮ ਸਭਿ ਬੀਚ ਬਿਪਾਸਾ ਕੇ ਤਿਹ ਡਾਰਿ।  
Bhai Santokh Singh, op.cit., Ras 4, Ansu 23, p. 2317.
78. Sikh Rehat Maryada, op.cit., p.30.

traditional obsequies of the Hindus.<sup>79</sup> It has also been made obligatory to offer the deg of krah prasad on behalf of the deceased at the time of the antim ardas (last prayers) of the Sikh.<sup>80</sup> According to Macauliffe, Hargobind, the sixth Guru of the Sikhs had also reaffirmed these instructions for the future generations of the Sikhs in preference of obsequies in the following words:<sup>81</sup>

When a Sikh dieth, let not the obsequies of the Hindus be performed for him, let sacred food be prepared and distributed, let the Granth Sahib be intoned and solemn prayer offered, as I caused on hearing of my father's death.<sup>82</sup> This is the way to prepare for the deceased a passage to Sachkhand.

79. ਪਾਛੇ ਚਲੀ ਰੀਤ ਇਹ ਆਈ। ਮਿਰਤਕ ਪਾਛੇ ਐਸ ਕਰਾਈ। ਗਰਬ ਪੁਰਾਨ ਪਛਾਵਤ ਕੋਊ। ਐਹ ਪੁਰਾਨ ਪੜ੍ਹਣ ਮਤ ਲੋਊ। ਬੇਦ ਪੁਰਾਨ ਅਬ ਸਭ ਮਬ ਕੀਨੇ। ਸਭ ਕਾ ਸਾਰ ਗੁਬ ਜੀ ਕੀਨੇ। ਮਿਤ ਪਾਛੇ ਇਹ ਰੀਤ ਸੁ ਕਰੋ। ਗੁਰੂਗੁਬ ਦਾ ਪਾਠ ਸੁ ਧਰੀ . . .॥414॥

Gur Bilas Patshahi Chhevin, op.cit., p. 90.

80. ਕੜਾਹਿ ਪ੍ਰਸਾਦਿ ਤਿਹ ਨਮਿਤ ਕਰਾਵੇ॥ ਨਰਕ ਦੁਆਰਾ ਕੋ ਸੋ ਨਹਿ ਜਾਵੇ॥ ਪਾਛੇ ਮਿਤਕ ਐਸ ਬਿਧ ਕਰੋ॥ ਜੀਵਨ ਜਤਨ ਐਸ ਬਿਧ ਧਰੋ॥414॥ ਦੇਹਰਾ॥  
Ibid.

81. M.A. Macauliffe, op.cit., pp. 1-2.

82. On ascertaining his father's death, he caused the Adi Granth to be read and employed Bhai Budha for the purpose. The musician of the temple sang the Guru's hymns to the accompaniment of the instruments. The singing and the reading of the Granth Sahib lasted for ten days ... Guru Hargobind then according to the custom usual on such occasions summoned all his Sikhs and invited the principal inhabitant of Amritsar to a banquet. He caused a large quantity of sacred food to be made and brought into the temple for the entertainment of the guests, while Bhai Budha read the Granth in the middle of the well ordered assembly, Gur Das stood and waved a gorgeous dāuri over the sacred volume. When the reading was ended, all the assembly reverently bowed their heads. The singers (ragis) began to sing the Guru's hymns. The sadd was intoned and solemn prayer offered. See: M.A. Macauliffe, The Sikh Religion, Its Gurus, Sacred Writings and Authors, 2nd edn. (Indian) (1919 rpt. New Delhi: S. Chand & Co., Ltd., 1978), Vol. IV, pp. 1-2.



This practice has now taken the form of social ritual of the Sikh way of life. According to Sikh Rehat Maryada, the sahaj path of the Adi Granth should be held in the memory of the deceased either at ~~the place of the deceased or~~ at some gurdwara on the day of <sup>the</sup> cremation ceremony. The bhog ceremony and the antim ardas should take place on the tenth day of the death of the deceased, if it is not possible, its date should be fixed in view of the convenience of the relatives. And if possible, kirtan should be performed daily at night.<sup>83</sup>

While doing so, Guru Arjan did not aim at providing alternate or distinct obsequies from those of the traditional Hinduism. In fact he made a conscious and deliberate efforts to liberate people from the complicated and brahamnical ceremonies and rituals with a view to simplifying them as far as possible. Moreover, to make the moral and ethical life of the Sikhs in consonance with the spirit of the message of Sikhism, it was necessary to modify them and attach them to the service and grace of God.

#### Daily Code of Conduct for the Sikhs

Guru Arjan also prescribed daily code of conduct for the Sikhs to regulate their lives. There are <sup>a</sup> number of references in Gurpartap Suraj Granth which throw ample light

83. Sikh Rehat Maryada, op.cit., p.30.

on the daily routine of the Sikhs. A Sikh is enjoined <sup>upon</sup> to get up early in the morning, clean his bowels, clean his body by taking a bath, offer his prayer and meditate on God's name.<sup>84</sup> After this he is expected to visit the Harimandir to offer his prayer before starting his day's work. He has been enjoined to show full reverence to the Adi Granth and treat it as the True Lord itself. So he should stand bowing his head with folded hands, in front of the Granth and offer some money according to his capacity.<sup>85</sup> He should, then, engage himself in his work throughout the day. In the evening, after the cessation of his work, he should again visit the Harimandir to offer his prayer and ardas.<sup>86</sup> But this injunction of visiting the Harimandir was not made obligatory to those Sikhs who were residing at far off places from this holy shrine. In that case, the Sikhs were expected to visit the local dharamsala in the morning and evening and they were asked to visit the

84. ਰਹੈ ਆਜ ਤੇ ਐਸੀ ਰਾਤ। . . ॥

ਪ੍ਰਭੂ ਭੇਰ ਹਰ ਸੇਚ ਸੁਣਾਹ। ਗੁਰਬਾਰੀ ਸੇ ਕੀਜੈ ਧਯਾਨ।

Bhai Santokh Singh, op.cit., Ras 2, Ansu 54, p. 1862.

85. ਪੁਰ ਸ੍ਰੀ ਹਰਿਮੰਦਰ ਮੈ ਜਾਵਹੁ । ਜਥਾ ਸੁਕਤੀ ਤਹਿ ਭੇਟ ਦਰਾਵਹੁ ॥34॥

ਰਾਖ ਜੇਰ ਹਰ ਸੀਮ ਰਵਾਵਹੁ। ਪ੍ਰਭੂ ਸਮਠ ਸਰਗਾ ਉਪਜਾਵਹੁ।

ਬਹੁਰੇ ਆਇ ਬਨਜ ਤੇ ਕੀਜੈ।

Ibid., Ras 2, Ansu 52, p. 1862.

86. ਦਿਨ ਸਗਰੇ ਮਹਿ ਰਾਗਾ ਰੀਜੈ ॥35॥ ਪੁਰ ਮੰਝਾ ਜਬਿ ਹੋਵਹਿ ਆਇ।

ਤਬਿ ਉਠਿ ਤਜਹੁ ਬਨਹੁ ਸਾਦਾਇ। ਸ੍ਰੀ ਹਰਿਮੰਦਰ ਦਰਗਹ ਰਹੈ।

Ibid.

the Harimandir on the festival of Diwali and Baisakhi for offering their prayer and have a dip in the holy water of Amritsar. This was considered as good as visiting the Harimandir daily.<sup>87</sup>

Thus, we see that this code of conduct as prescribed by Guru Arjan for the Sikhs has many distinct features. It clearly indicates that the labour of any kind for living and social activity and worship were inseparably linked with a view to keeping the lives of the Sikhs ethically and morally in accordance with the injunctions of Sikhism; that is why the practical life and the religious activity are not regarded

to be two independent spheres of life. Constant communion is therefore kept between the two and worship is not relegated to a fixed day of the week like the Christian Church.<sup>88</sup>

Festivals and fairs are major agencies of creating fusion in the society. Guru Arjan made a discreet choice of

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87. (1) ਜੇ ਨਰ ਬਸਰਿ ਦੂਰ ਕਿਸ ਥਾਨੇ। ਆਵਹਿ ਦੀਪਮਾਨ ਹਿਤ ਠਲੇ ॥57॥  
ਬਹੁਰ ਮੇ ਕੀ ਜਬਿ ਸੰਕ੍ਰਾਂਤਿ। ਤਬਿ ਇਤ ਆਇ ਸਨਾਨਹਿ ਗਾਤਿ।  
ਜਬਾ ਬਰਖ ਦਿਨ ਮੇਜਤਿ ਰਹੀ। ਦੁਇਨਿ ਪਰਬ ਫਲ ਤੈ ਸੋ ਲਹੀ ॥58॥

Gurpartap Suraj Granth, Ras 2, Ansu 56, p. 1870.

(ii) ਦੁਇ ਸਮੇ ਧੁਮਾਲਾ ਜਾਵਹੁ। ਪਰਬ ਦਿਵਸ ਗਰ ਏਨਿ ਆਵਹੁ।  
ਦੀਪ ਮਾਲ ਬੇਸਾਖੀ ਜਾਨਿ। ਆਨ ਸੁਧਾਸਰ ਕਰਹੁ ਸਨਾਨ ॥36॥  
Ibid., Ras 3, Ansu 58, p. 2178.

88. Piara Singh Sambhi, "Living in Multicultural Society A Sikh looks at the christian church" Journal of Studies in Sikhism and Comparative Religion, op.cit., p. 109.

certain festivals which may be described as the Sikh days of celebration. There are many references in Gurpartap Suraj Granth wherein the Guru is said to have declared it very auspicious to have a bath in the holy tank of Amritsar on the Diwali and Baisakhi festivals. The importance of the holy dip on these two occasions was rated much more than the performance of sixty eight pilgrimages of the Hindus.<sup>89</sup> A large number of people started coming to have a dip in the holy tank on these days which has taken the form of a mela (fair).<sup>90</sup> The selection of these two festivals seems to be rather spontaneous as these two festivals represented two distinct groups of people. For the commercial class, Diwali was the most auspicious and a large number of the followers belonged to the khatri and arora castes. Besides them, a large number of peasants had also joined the Sikh movement. With their entry into the fold of Sikhism, Baisakhi, a festival connected with the cutting of crops, acquired

89. (i) ਦੀਪਮਾਲ ਬੇਸਾਖੀ ਦੋਇ। ਛਟੇ ਮਾਸ ਤੀਰਥ ਸਭਿ ਤੀਰਥ ਸਭ ਕੋਇ।  
ਰਹੈ ਸੁਧਾਸਰ ਮੇਂ ਤਬਿ ਆਇ। ਜੋ ਨਰ ਤਿਸ ਛਿਨ ਇਹਾ ਨਹਾਇ ॥ 62॥  
ਸਭ ਤੀਰਥ ਕੇ ਮਜਨ ਹੋਇ। ਯਾ ਤੇ ਅਧਿਕ ਮਹਾਤਮ ਜੋਇ।  
ਕਰਇ ਸੁਨਾਨ ਸਕਨ ਫਲ ਪਾਵੈ। . . . ॥ 63 ॥

(ii) ਦੋਨਹੁ ਪਰਬ ਬਿਖੈ ਇਸ ਥਾਨੇ।  
ਅਠਿਸਠਿ ਤੀਰਥ ਆਇ ਸਨਾਨੇ। . . . ॥ 59॥

Bhai Santokh Singh, op.cit., p. 1870.

90. Gur Bilas Patshahi Chhevin, op.cit., p. 19;  
Kesar Singh Chhiber, Bansavalinama Dasan Patshahian Ka, printed in Parakh, (Chandigarh: Panjab University, 1972), p. 53.

significance. Moreover, these two festivals occurred over a gap of six months, one just before the advent of summer and other before the beginning of winter. They formed two points of time in a year convenient for the followers to visit the Harimandir.

Like the Baisakhi and Diwali, masya (amavas) fair in the month of Bhadon has been given special place in the observances at Tarn Taran. This tradition, according to Bhai Santokh Singh, the author of Gurpartap Suraj Granth, originated with Guru Arjan who is said to have declared it very auspicious to assemble in a fair on this day at Tarn Taran to have a dip in the tank for the atonement of their sins.<sup>91</sup> Since the days of Guru Arjan it has been observed as a great festival of the Sikhs at Tarn Taran. These celebrations led to the replacement of traditional pilgrimages of the Hindus.<sup>92</sup>

The installation or the Parkash divas of the holy Granth has now become one of the important gurpurabs of the Sikhs. It is celebrated annually with great zeal and zest at the Harimandir. On this day, precious articles and jewellery belonging<sup>g</sup> to the temple are also displayed and is called 'Jalau'  
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91. Bhai Santokh Singh, op.cit., Ras 3, Ansu 28, p. 2219.

92. Niharanjan Ray, The Sikh Gurus and the Sikh Society, (Patiala: Punjabi University, 1970), p. 71.

Special kirtan programme is also chalked out on this occasion. At night, illumination is profusely made in the temple and surrounding shrines. Fascinating fire-works are also displayed at night.<sup>93</sup> Besides this celebration of the central temple, this anniversary is also celebrated with great zeal and zest at the other important Sikh religious centres by holding diwans and taking out the processions<sup>94</sup> of the Adi Granth. Utmost respect and dedication is paid to the aswari of the Granth while taking out the procession.

It is evident from the above account that Guru Arjan made conscious and deliberate effort to establish the whole gamut of socio-religious practices which form <sup>an</sup> essential aspect of any institutionalized religion. All religions prescribe a definite form of social functions on the basis of patterned system of practices which in the case of Guru Arjan ranged from the practices concerning object and place of worship to the daily routine of individual, day-to-day functions of family and society. These practices regulated the socio-religious life in such a way that may not suggest a complete break with the past but it did establish an alternative socio-religious model having an independent

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93. Madanjit Kaur, op.cit., p. 132.

94. Dr. Harnam Singh Shan, Paper "Sri Guru Granth Sahib ate Unah de pahle anuwadk" presented at Patiala: Punjabi University on 15 and 16 April, 1985, p. 5.

and unique identity. The uniqueness of the patterning of socio-religious practices established by Guru Arjan lies in the fact that he transformed the Sikh movement for its continuity and stability in such a way that the activities were performed smoothly around the most stable institution i.e. the Adi Granth and not the ephemeral person of the Guru. Moreover, by evolving practices of worship of the object, he made the Sikhs realize the sovereign status of the Granth. This kind of integration, it might be logically argued, tends to restrict his voluntariness; nonetheless, it imparts strength to the community as it helps in the voluntary surrender of individual will to the collectivity. Therefore, sociologically speaking, the symbolic dilemma of objectification versus alienation was solved in Sikhism as the holy Granth not only became the object of worship but it became a focal point of all social, religious and later political activities of the Sikhs for all times to come and this went a long way in alienating the Sikhs from the traditional Hindus and marking out distinct identity of their own.

## CHAPTER VI

### SIKH OUTLOOK

Social functions of all religions are patterned on culturally shared beliefs and dogmas for they sustain worldview, life style and order of existence of the followers. It is true particularly in the case of Sikhism which began as a revolt against the prevailing demoralizing socio-religious system. It is in this context that the emergence of Sikhism as a religion assumes significance. Originating essentially with the literate class, the cosmological as well as ethical and moral outlook provide complex system of norms, of course with a view to achieving salvation. In valuational terms it transcended caste, kinship or occupational groups and the norms were transformed into practices and rituals standardizing the religious and social activities of the Sikhs. In this chapter an attempt has been made to discern a pattern of Sikh values to grasp the full import of Sikh institutions and practices.

Human salvation, in Sikhism, is possible by continuously striving "to be the ideal self, as a self, in its social relationship; and also what a religionist may say to be acceptable to God. The uplift has to be of the whole self."<sup>1</sup> It is in this respect that Guru Nanak posed

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1. Avtar Singh, Ethics of the Sikhs, (Patiala: Punjabi University, 1970), p.24.



a fundamental question in the first hymn of the Japuji kiv sachiara hovie kiv kure tute paa<sup>2</sup> meaning thereby how to become a truthful man or gurmukh and how the domination of the evils is to be exploded or the inner filth of the mind is to be removed. But in the subsequent line of this hymn the Guru has also suggested that a path of acting to the hukam or will of the Lord is a way to achieve salvation or self realization.<sup>3</sup> In both the cases human action is an essential ingredient for salvation. In the former case human salvation is achieved by conquering the hinderances or cardinal vices such as lust (kam), anger (krodh), greed (lobh), covetousness (moh), and pride (ahankar).<sup>4</sup> These are regarded as "arch enemies of man"<sup>5</sup> in the realization of self (Truthfulman or gurmukh). But in the case of hukam, it is imperative, it is 'will'. It obviously establishes that major concerns of Guru Nanak were: surrender to the universal will and adherence to the moral code which he considered very important means of self-realization. These two aspects were integrated by the logic that a

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2. Adi Granth, Japuji, p.1.

3. ਗੁਰਮਿ ਰਸਾਈ ਚਲਣ ਨਾਨਕ ਨਿਖਿਅ ਨਾਨਿ ॥੧॥  
Ibid.

4. Ibid., Gauri, M.1, p. 503; Ramkali, M.1, p. 913.

5. Gobind Singh Mansukhani, The Quintessence of Sikhism 3rd edn. (1959 rpt. Amritsar: Shiromani Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee, 1985), p. 155.

spirit learns to surrender itself entirely to the will of God and as a consequence it acquires the qualities of utter humility and selflessness, and thus it becomes free from the sway of the evil propensities and actions, which hinder spiritual progress. But the sway of the evil propensities is so intense and pervasive that it even becomes difficult for a great man to resist its temptation without purging the inner self. Therefore, the Sikhs desirous of purging off their inner vices are required to do so by the recitation of nam and surrendering themselves to the 'will' of the Master.

Considering the aforesaid system incommensurate with the evil propensities of man, Guru Arjan elaborated the vices in wellknown traditional terms so that it becomes a part of the psychic behaviour of the followers to abhor those cardinal vices. The idea behind this seems to create a consciousness among the Sikhs about these vices and to condition and educate them towards the performance of moral acts which are anti-thesis of immoral acts, with a view to achieving liberation from "the cycle of birth and death."<sup>6</sup> Cardinal among them, the kam i.e. lust, is<sup>a</sup> major force which compels a man to follow evil course.<sup>7</sup> There are many

6. Ibid.

7. Adi Granth, Asa, M.1, p. 568.

references in Guru Arjan's bani to the evil effects of this propensity.<sup>8</sup> Special stress seems to have been laid on the need to escape from being overpowered by it. According to Guru Arjan Dev it prohibits the individual from imbibing moral values. Though the satisfaction from kam is relatively short lived, yet as a propensity it is fairly permanent which psychologically weakens the mind and blunts the rational judgement of all the people irrespective of their socio-economic status.<sup>9</sup> Losing the power of discrimination, the person is not satisfied with one object of lust as is evident from Guru Arjan's remarks: "He sins and then regrets; so he withers away with sorrow."<sup>10</sup> Devoid of any tender feeling, the inner self of such a person becomes incapable of perceiving moral values.<sup>11</sup> And at times when the urge of this propensity is so severe, he unconsciously follows the path of self destruction.<sup>12</sup>

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8. Ibid., Slokas Sahaskriti, M.5, p. 1358; Dhanasari M. 5, p. 671; Ibid., p. 672; Var of Gauri, M.5, p. 315.

9. O Lust, thou givest an abode in hell; thou causest man to wander in many a womb; thou stealest the heart, thou pervadest the three worlds, thou destroyest devotion, penance, and virtue; Thou confereſt scant happiness, O bodiless one, thou art ficle, thou fillest high and low;...

Adi Granth, Slokas, Sahaskriti, M.5, p. 1358.

10. Adi Granth, Dhanasari, M. 5, p. 672.

11. Some feed eye on the beauty of other women, hid from the world's eye, yee if these be their deeds, they come to grief. Ibid., Var of Gauri, pauri, M.5, p. 315.

12. The elephant is lured by kam to his enslavement and he goes as he is led by an other, And the deer is lured to death by the sweet melodies of music. Ibid., Dhanasari, M.5, p. 671.

After kam, lobh (covetousness) is viewed as a wave which implies that the activity caused by this impulse is the product of something in the object of lobh as well as the presence of some reciprocating tendency in man and as a joint effect creates a false perspective of value, and gives overriding importance and attachment to riches or material values. His activity under this impulse does not bother about the moral or spiritual values of life. The innerself under its sway remains incessantly restless, it wavers and wobbles in all possible directions to gather more and more riches. In this vicious circle he becomes extremely individualistic, selfish and egoistic and is not **considerate** of the friendly, social or family obligations. One becomes abnormal under the sway of this impulse in one's acts and behaviour.<sup>13</sup> Since greed may motivate disregard for social loyalties and responsibilities, Guru Arjan stressed the great need for the moral control of covetousness (lobh) in order to purge one's feelings of the same and purify actions for the realization of the innerself.

Moh, as a propensity, in Sikhism, indicates two meanings, namely, a sense of being cheated of consciousness (delusion) as well as an attitude of attachment to the

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13. Ibid., Slokas Sahaskriti, M.5, p. 1358.

mundane as is revealed from Guru Nanak's hymn, "The whole world is engulfed by mundane values and attachment to it."<sup>14</sup> Commenting on this propensity Guru Arjan addresses,

O' unconquerable, O powerful hero of the battlefield, that moves down every thing before it has enticed away the hearts of even the gods and their attendants, heavenly musicians, the man, animal life and the birds."<sup>15</sup>

Such like passages are indicative of human tendency whereby men cling to the worldly things and identify them as their own i.e. family, wealth etc. which is a result of delusion, for one is ignorant of the real and changing nature of the things of the world. Under the sway of this tendency, one's outlook becomes narrow and <sup>it</sup> makes one unable to view the interconnectedness of things. A man may become self-centred and egoist and shows a complete disregard for those who are beyond his circle of preference, under the sway of this impulse. But in Sikhism, nonattachment, does not mean renunciation of the social duties or asceticism but the ideal stressed by the Gurus is to live in the world as a householder but live aloof like a lotus flower in the water.<sup>16</sup>

Krodh (wrath) is another vice taken note of in Sikhism. Individuals under the

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14. Ibid., Todi, M.5, p. 443.

15. Ibid., Prabhati, M.1, p. 1142.

16. Ibid., Sloka Sahaskriti, M.5, p. 1359.

sway of this emotion may lead to their own destruction as well as that of those against whom it is directed.<sup>17</sup> Guru Arjan has termed krodh as the father of strifes and conflicts. The men under its sway dance to its tune like monkeys and become devils causing social conflicts or destruction.<sup>18</sup> Not merely destructive of reason, it militates against an attempt to establish social cohesion and integration which was the chief motive of the Sikh Gurus.

Ahankar (pride) is another evil emotion which should be morally controlled to realize the self. But it may be pointed out that the meaning of ahankar as pride is different from ahankar in the sense of the principle of individuation as understood in the Sankhya School of Indian philosophy.<sup>19</sup> But, the term which more appropriately conveys this principle of individuation in Sikhism is haumai.<sup>20</sup> Every person in his empirical existence has a narrow and limited viewpoint,<sup>21</sup> i.e. I-am-ness, a feeling of individuation which may be defined as haumai. It may arise from "One's possession of beauty or power"<sup>22</sup> or any other cause

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17. Avtar Singh, op.cit., p. 68

18. Adi Granth, Slokas Sahaskriti, M.5, p. 1358.

19. I.C. Sharma, Ethical Philosophy of India (London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd., 1965), pp. 192-193.

20. Ahankar in Sankhya philosophy has almost similar connotation as haumai in Sikhism.

21. Adi Granth, Japuji, p. 1.

22. Ibid., Slokas Sahaskriti, M.5, p. 1359.

which makes a man proud of his achievements<sup>23</sup> inclusive of pride in giving charity or any good deed.<sup>24</sup> Once addressing the Sikhs Lalu and Balu Guru Arjan said,

Banish pride, worldly love, and envy. Bear not ill will to others, so shall others bear not ill will to you. Cheerfully meet and shake hands with the Guru's Sikhs. Walk humbly and speak civilly to all when you meet, share your food with others, and live by honest labour. By observing this instruction, you shall obtain all happiness.<sup>25</sup>

Pride not only gives rise to the feeling of relentlessly pursuing the self interest but also perpetuates affliction of cruelties and repressions to the humanity at large.<sup>26</sup>

It blurs the individual vision so much that he can not realize the unity of mankind, and instead develops social relations in terms of jealousy and mutual animosity.

From the above description we may come to the conclusion that kam, krodh, lobh, moh and ahankar are evils which cause debasement of an individual and the society he belongs to. They are to be controlled, regulated and sublimated with positive virtues and not by ascetic practices or infliction on the body but by means natural

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23. Ibid., Gauri Sukhmani, M.5, p. 278.

24. Ibid., p. 288.

25. Macauliffe, op.cit., p. 68; Gurpartap Suraj Granth, op.cit., Ras 3, Ansu 54, p. 2157.

26. Adi Granth, Slokas Sahaskriti, M.5, p. 1358.

to man 'sahaj subhai' i.e. the cultivation of religious sentiment more appropriately spiritual disposition. And according to Guru Arjan, "Enshrine the Gods Name in the Mind, contemplate your Guru in your home . . . and all your sins are effaced, joining the **Sangat** of the saints. The Lord's Name is the treasure of virtue."<sup>27</sup> By developing the culture of religious reverence and expansive consciousness, it was possible to effectively eliminate the evil propensities and to realize one's self.<sup>28</sup>

But in Sikhism virtues of wisdom, love, truthfulness, compassion, righteousness, fearlessness, contentment and humility are to be cultivated by overcoming the vices with the recitation of nam and joining the assembly of the saints. Different scholars of Indian philosophy have used different terms to denote the ethical meanings of virtue. According to some scholars the term guna, is also used to mean good qualities, virtues, merits and excellences in some older Indian literature.<sup>29</sup> In Sikhism, guna is used to mean virtues and good qualities of the self. The contrast of 'gun' is 'augun' (evil quality) and contradictory is 'vingun' (absence of gun)".<sup>30</sup> Guru Nanak advised his

27. Ibid., Sorath, M.5, p. 621

28. Avtar Singh, op.cit., p. 82.

29. Monier Monier Williams, A Sanskrit-English Dictionary (Oxford: 1925), p. 367.

30. Avtar Singh, op.cit., p. 84



followers to replace vices with virtues for he says "as many are the vices, so many are the chains round one's neck. One removes vice with virtue, for virtue is our only friend."<sup>31</sup> The virtues could be acquired and cultivated with the repetition of nam and through the social communication with the virtuous or the holy as, "In the society of the holy, one becomes holy, and one runs after virtues, forsaking his sins."<sup>32</sup> This has been brought out more explicitly by Guru Arjan in the second pauri of seventh canto of his famous Sukhmani,

In the company of Sadh  
he blossoms forth,  
And always keep his ruddy glow.  
By the water Nam his  
thirst is quelled.  
The passion five in chain  
are held,  
Looked with Sadh man does<sup>33</sup>  
not go astray....

This implies that the recitation of nam and the company of the saints not only make an individual virtuous but also ensures his contact with the God and serve as channel for the overflow of God's virtues like love, wisdom, compassion, righteousness, fearlessness, humility and contentment into those persons who perform the dual function

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31. Adi Granth, Sorath, M. 1, p. 595

32. Ibid., Asa, M.5, p. 414.

33. Ibid., Gauri Sukhmani, M.5, p. 271.

mentioned above, and the process helps in overcoming and eliminating vices. But, what is more important to note in this connection is that Guru Arjan institutionalized them in such holy forums as the gurdwaras where the Sikh could without any difficulty visit and assemble in the presence of the Spiritual Guru (Adi Granth) and hear kirtan in praise of the Lord and recite the divine nam.<sup>34</sup> Secondly, he seems to have regulated their spiritual and moral life by prescribing a daily routine as is evident from many references available in Gurpartap Suraj Granth and accordingly:

A Sikh is enjoined to get up quite early in the morning and after making his ablution, say his prayer and then visit the Gurdwara (Harimandir) or the local Dharamsala according to their access from the places of their stay, once before the starting his daily work. In the evening, after the cession of their work, visit the Gurdwara for having a sight of the Guru and saying his prayer again.<sup>35</sup>

This fact regarding the daily religious routine of the Sikhs is also confirmed by scholars like M.A. Macauliffe.<sup>36</sup>

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- 34. Kahan Singh, Gurmat Prabhakar, op.cit., p.359.
  - 35. Santokh Singh, op.cit., Ras 2, Ansu 55, p. 1862; Ras 3, Ansu 58, p. 2178.
  - 36. They were to rise early, bath and go to the temple to hear exposition of the Gurus hymns. After that they were to attend to their worldly affairs till evening, when their worship should begin anew by the repetition of the Rahiras and Sohila. M.A. Macauliffe, op.cit., p.20.

Besides prescribing the daily religious routine~~for~~ the Sikhs, Guru Arjan has also enjoined upon the Sikhs to recite the name of the Lord day and night (eight pahars)<sup>37</sup> which implies that the Sikhs are to enshrine the name of Lord in their hearts whether they are at work or in sleep. Thus, we see that the practical life and religious activity were not regarded to be the two independent spheres of life. A constant communion is kept between the two and worship is not relegated to fixed day of the week.<sup>38</sup>

The ultimate objective in prescribing daily routine, it may be argued, was to achieve salvation, but it was to be achieved by cultivating certain positive moral values such as the sweet speech, humble disposition, charity i.e. sharing of material things with less fortunate brethren, seeking welfare of all and dignity of labour<sup>39</sup> negating parasitism.<sup>40</sup>

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37. ਨਿਤ ਉਠ ਗਾਵਹੁ ਪ੍ਰਭੂ ਕੀ ਬਾਣੀ॥ ਆਠ ਪਹਰ ਰਹਿ ਸਿਮਰਹੁ ਪ੍ਰਾਣੀ॥  
Adi Granth, Prabhati, M.5, p. 1340.

38. Piara Singh Sambhi, "Living in a Multi-Cultural Society: A Sikh Looks at the Christian Church", Studies in Sikhism and Comparative Religion,

39. ਮਿਠਾ ਬੋਲਨਿ ਅਰ ਨਿਵ ਚਲਨਾ। ਵਡ ਖਾਵਨਾ ਹਿਤ ਧਰਿ ਮਿਲਨਾ।  
ਧਰਮ ਕਿਰਤ ਤੇ ਕਰਨਿ ਅਚਾਰਾ। ਪਖਹੁ ਕਰਮ ਦੇਤਿ ਸੁਖ ਸਾਰਾ॥ 5॥  
Bhai Santokh Singh, op.cit., Ras 3, Ansu 54, p. 2157.

40. (i) ਮਾਗਹਿ ਟੂਕਾ ਤਿਪਤ ਨਾ ਪਾਵੈ।  
ਨਾਥ ਛੋਡਿ ਜਚਾਇ ਲਾਜ ਨ ਆਵੈ॥ 2॥  
Adi Granth, Ramkali, M. 5, p. 886.  
(ii) ਉਦਮ ਕਰਦਿਆ ਜੀਉ ਤੇ ਕਮਾਵਦਿਆ ਸੁਖ ਭੁਖ॥  
Ibid., Gujri Ki Var, M.5, p. 522.

Guru Arjan also mentions about the cultivation of God-inspired courage when he narrates the incidence of Sulahi Khan.<sup>41</sup> On the pretext of having to collect the revenue of Punjab, Sulahi Khan obtained leave from the Mughal Emperor to proceed there, but his real intention was to ruin the Guru. On hearing this Guru Arjan did not fear him nor did he seek any compromise, instead like a brave man offered prayers to God for his protection against Sulahi Khan.<sup>42</sup> By "becoming fearless he enjoyed the state of eternal bliss."<sup>43</sup> The virtue of courage or fearlessness is indicative of infused spiritual courage as is evident from Guru Arjan's hymn, "God is fearless. He dwelleth with thee, why fearest thou then."<sup>44</sup> According to Bhai Santokh Singh, Guru Arjan addressed Adit Soni, a warrior, on the excellence of virtue of dharma, the virtue of fighting for a righteous cause and never deserting the master, rather dying fighting for him.<sup>45</sup> Bhai Vir Singh suggests that the Guru simply

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41. He was the Faujdar of Lahore and an ally of Guru Arjan's elder brother Prithi Chand, and very hostile to Guru Arjan Dev. He was constant source of trouble to the Guru.
  42. Sulahi Khan's horse started at an accidental flight of a bird from under his feet and ran with his rider straight into a kiln in full blast. In a few moments, horse and the rider became a mass of cinders.  
M.A. Macauliffe, op.cit., p.86.
  43. Adi Granth, Dhanasari, M.5, p. 675.
  44. Ibid., M. 5, p. 206.
  45. Bhai Santokh Singh, op.cit., p. 2193.

advised the warrior that he should fight for the dharma which transformed the violent act into benevolence for it was done to relieve the oppressed one. It is legitimate to defeat and humble the oppressor with a fight.<sup>46</sup> But some scholars believe that this sermon of Guru Arjan is marked by the spirit of post Gobind Singh era. It is under the influence of this temper that the scene prior to the Sixth Guru is sought to be reconstructed by scholars.

In Sikhism, great stress is laid on the service of mankind.<sup>47</sup> Explaining it, Guru Arjan says, "God is intertwined with the servant like the warp and woof. He sustains his servants, and gives them peace. I bring water for his servants, fan them and grind their corn, for this also is the service of God."<sup>48</sup> This implies that the service to the humanity is the service to God and the Guru, thus ascribing service a higher status than prayer. The phrase he uses for explaining this is "Servant of the Servants" i.e. humblest of the humble which is indicative of great humility which could only be cultivated by performing social

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46. Sri Gurpartap Suraj Granth, op.cit., p. 2153, Ras 3, Ansu 62 (f.n.)

47. Adi Granth, Asavari, M.5, p. 409.

48. Ibid., Majh, M.5, p. 1010.

loyalties and moral obligations involved in social service i.e. seva which always is selfless service helping man in achieving self realization.<sup>49</sup>

The tenet of social service was given concrete form with the emergence of gurdwara as an institution under Guru Arjan Dev. The gurdwara apart from playing the role of imparting spiritual instructions became the agency of social service or seva, considered in the form of manual labour such as cooking, washing utensils and serving food in guru-ka-langar, as was done in the early dharamsalas. But some new forms such as the shoe-keeping service, holding chhabils (water service) etc. seem to have emerged as a consequence of the emergence of gurdwara institution. Similarly, when Guru Arjan took in hand the construction of tanks and temples, baolis and other projects of community welfare on a large scale, the service also began to be rendered in the form of superintending the construction work and procuring building material etc.<sup>50</sup> where a large number of

49. ਸੇਵਾ ਕਰਤ ਹੋਇ ਨਿਹਕਾਮੀ ਤਿਸ ਕਉ ਹੋਤ ਪਰਾਪਤਿ ਸੁਆਮੀ।

Ibid., Gauri Sukhmani, M.5, p. 286.

50. Bhai Salo, Bhai Bhagatu, Bhai Piara, Bhai Behlo and Kalyana were asked to superintend the construction of Amritsar temple and procure building material. Macauliffe, The Sikh Religion, Its Gurus, Sacred Writings and Authors, 2nd edn. (Indian) (1909 rpt. New Delhi: S. Chand & Co., 1972), Vol. III, p.p. 3-4.

Sikhs undertook seva by <sup>the</sup> rendering of manual labour at the site.<sup>51</sup> But apart from rendering manual labour, the people offered seva in the form of cash or kar bheta.<sup>52</sup> Though the scope of the service expanded under the tenure of Guru Arjan Dev in view of the historical situation and circumstances but the philosophical basis of the service remained the same.

Thus we see that Guru Arjan made conspicuous efforts in inculcating various virtues among his followers by providing them the forum of gur sangat in the gurdwara. He kept them in constant communion with God by prescribing the daily spiritual routine, fixing five values of their life and with the display of his practical examples connected with his life.

With these measures as discussed above Guru Arjan strove to make his Sikhs virtuous and moral beings, but at the same time he made it imperative that the social, religious and economic beliefs and practices be also purified by discarding the unhealthy, superfluous and meaningless traditional practices and ceremonies, in the process of

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51. Bhai Santokh Singh, op.cit., p. 1859.

52. Gurpartap Suraj Granth mentions the names of two chaudhuries, Lal Dhillon, and Langah of Patti. They not only took part in seva themselves but also offered hard cash. Ibid., p. 1863.

spreading not only the message of universalism of Guru Nanak but Guru Arjan stressed the brotherhood of man in terms of fatherhood of God.<sup>53</sup> He emphasised the equality of mankind without any discrimination of birth, power or the varna and rejected the traditional structure of the Hindu society which denied the right of salvation to the lower caste people.<sup>54</sup> He expressly declared that castes were no consideration in the realization of God and in all the four varnas, whosoever recites the Divine nam would attain salvation.<sup>55</sup> He also declared that the message of peace was common and open to all the four varnas - khatiri, brahaman, shudra and vaisya.<sup>56</sup> It was quite a radical step at that time because the shudras and the mallechhas were not allowed to enter the temples of the Hindus and similarly the mosques were closed to the kafirs (Hindus).

53. Adi Granth, Majh, M.5, Chaupadas, p. 97.

54. Guru Arjan has expressed that the same Divine Light is contained in whole of the vegetation, animals and the mankind whether he is a monarch or a commoner like the presence of the fire in vegetation and ghee in the milk. (Ibid., Sorath M.5, p. 617). Moreover, he observes that the wise of the God looks upon all alike, like the wind that blows alike for the commoner and the King. (Ibid., Gauri Sukhmani, M.5, p. 272).

55. ਚਹੁ ਵਰਣਾ ਮਹਿ ਜਪੈ ਕਉ ਨਾਮਿ॥ ਜੋ ਜੋ ਜਪੈ ਤਿਸ ਕੀ ਗਤਿ ਹੋਇ॥  
Ibid., Gauri Sukhmani, M.5, p. 274.

56. ਖਤਰੀ ਬ੍ਰਾਹਮਣ ਸੂਦ ਵੈਸ ਉਪਦੇਸ ਚਹੁ ਵਰਣਾ ਕਉ ਸਾਝਾ।  
Ibid.,



Thus Guru Arjan gave a universal character to the institution of gurdwara in the eyes of the Sikhs. Every man or woman belonging to any sect or religion was allowed to visit the gurdwara and could offer prayer and join the congregation in the recitation of nam or kirtan. But what is more important to mention is that every individual was eligible to recite and explain the hymns of the Adi Granth. Any Sikh could conduct the religious services in the Sikh temple and lead the congregation in a prayer.<sup>57</sup> It was done to avoid priesthood because that encourages formalism. Still more significant to note is that in several matters, for instance, in respect of marriage customs and rituals, death rites and pilgrimages etc. he rejected the elaborate priestly rites and rituals of the brahminical Hinduism and replaced them with much simpler and much less costlier rituals. He purified religious beliefs by discarding empty and unmeaningful ritualistic performance of austerities and all traditional ways of seeking God. Instead, he suggested that the simran was the only road to achieving salvation.<sup>58</sup> He also brought home to

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57. Piara Singh Sambhi, loc. cit., p.107.

58. M.L. Peace, op.cit., p.69.

the Sikhs that the study of scripture, performance of austerities and such like outward observances pamper man's pride whereas the simran fosters humility in them putting before them the personality and the image of God. This humility brings them nearer to God, the goal of their earthly mission.<sup>59</sup>

Besides, Guru Arjan also made an earnest attempt to purify the minds of the Sikhs by discarding the shagun and apshagun theory of the brahmans. According to him "shagun and apshagun are to those who do not enshrine the nam of their Lord."<sup>60</sup> But for the Sikhs who were essentially religious men and who remembered the name of the divine Lord day and night were unaffected by the bad omens because they had learnt to live according to the dictates (bhana) of the Lord which was predestined.<sup>61</sup> Besides these, he simplified the ritual of starting the day-to-day important activities of life, such as laying the foundation stone of the building, opening of new business, going on tours or starting the education of the children etc. by

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59. Numerous Shastras and Simirities have I studied and searched: Saith Nanak: All these equal not meditation on the invaluable Name Divine.  
Adi Granth, Gauri Sukhmani, M.5, p. 265.

60. ਸ਼ੁਗਨ ਅਪਸ਼ੁਗਨ ਤਿਸ ਕਉ ਨਾਗਹਿ ਜਿਸ ਚਿਤ ਨ ਆਵੈ।  
Ibid., Asa, M.5, p.

61. Ibid., Japuji, p.1.

offering ardas and deg of krah parsad by any one who is present on this occasion. According to Gurpartap Suraj Granth the mahurat of Tarn Taran tank was done by offering ardas to the Almighty by Bhai Budha on Baisakh 17, 1647 B.K. (1590 A.D.).<sup>62</sup> According to Bhai Vir Singh, here the meaning of the mahurat is the starting of work as is very clear from the subsequent lines of the poet that after offering the prayer with the sacred karah prasad, the work was started.<sup>63</sup> This, however, does not denote the good omen or time according to the movement of stars in the brahminical concept. This view is further confirmed by the author of Gurpartap Suraj Granth stating the sakhi of Paira Mokha, a Sikh of the Guru who was sent to a distant place to bring a pothi of Guru Nanak's hymns without any consultation of the auspicious day or the time (mahurat). He set out for the purpose after the recitation of the ardas.<sup>64</sup> It seems that Guru Arjan was able to purge off the Sikhs from the traditional dogmatism and superstitious beliefs of the brahminical Hinduism from day-to-day life.

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62. Bhai Santokh Singh, op.cit., f.n., p. 2216.

63. ਕਰਿ ਅਰਦਾਸ ਤਿਹਾਵਲ ਕੇਰੀ।  
ਸਿਮਰੈ ਸਭਿ ਸਤਿਗੁਰ ਤਿਸ ਚੇਰੀ॥5॥  
ਕਰਯੋ ਮਹੂਰਤ ਖਨਨਿ ਰਗਾ ਏ।

Ibid., Ras 3, Ansu 67, p. 2216.

64. Ibid., Ras 3, Ansu 32, p. 2041.

Another notable example which Guru Arjan displayed for removing the ignorance and superstitious beliefs of the Sikhs was not to propitiate Durga, the goddess of smallpox when Guru Hargobind had a very severe attack of smallpox.<sup>65</sup> Rejecting the Hindu tradition, Guru Arjan addressed the Hindu friends:

God is my sole prop; I have relinquished other hopes. God, the perfect Lord of excellences, is powerful over all. The Name is the support of God's slave who entereth his protection. Reliance on God is in saints hearts. He Himself preserveth; He Himself bestoweth; He Himself cherisheth.<sup>66</sup>

He thus showed utmost faith by meditating and repeating the divine nam and offering ardas for the recovery of his son, for he viewed God as omnipotent, the preserver, bestower, and cherisher of all. God was gracious to accept the ardas of the Guru and Hargobind opened his eyes on the ninth day of the disease<sup>67</sup> and as a shukrana Guru Arjan composed the following hymns:<sup>68</sup>

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65. According to Sikand Puran of the Hindus, the Goddess of smallpox should be thus addressed, 'I bow to Sitla Devi who rideth on a donkey, who is naked, who wearth a broom as her diadam, and whose forehead is adored with a sieve. It was a tradition with the Hindus to propitiate the said Devi for the hope of early recovery from the malady. Macauliffe, op.cit., p. 43.
66. Adi Granth, Bilawal, M.5, p.f. Macauliffe, op.cit., p.4.
67. The Divine Guru hath opened his eyes, My anxieties have fled, my prayers have been successful. God hath preserved my son from the smallpox; The Lord, the Supreme Being hath shown mercy... Ibid., Gauri M.5, c.f. Macauliffe, op.cit., p.44.
68. Ibid., Devgandhari, p. 45.

O God, Thou hast been merciful, There is comfort and Joy, O God; my boy hath recovered. Claspings both hands I made supplication and meditated on Supreme Being in my heart.

God giving his hand hath preserved him and removed all his sufferings. The husband and wife joined in rejoicing and singing victory to God.

Saith Nanak, I am a sacrifice to the man who saveth all.

Guru Arjan thus not only purified the religious beliefs of the Sikhs by discarding the unmeaningful superstitious practice of worshipping gods and goddesses but also taught them to worship and pray to the Almighty God.

Guru Arjan also made it very clear to his Sikhs that "Simran purifies us of all moral and spiritual taints and paves the way to salvation."<sup>69</sup> Such a man, writes M.L. Peace, "who practices the Name and learns to abide by the divine will (phana) enjoys paradisaal happiness even in the midst of earthly turmoils and tribulations. Guru Arjan Dev's life that maintained its tranquillity in the face of hostile forces is a pointer to this truth."<sup>70</sup>

Like the founder Guru, Guru Arjan has also stressed and elaborated the economic ethics of the Sikhs. According

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69. Ibid., Gauri Sukhmani, M.5, p. 262.

70. M.L. Peace, op.cit., p.68.

to Bhai Santokh Singh, Arjan invariably addressed the Sikhs to earn their bread by work and spare a part of it for their less fortunate fellows.<sup>71</sup> The Sikhs were also advised to contribute daswandh regularly out of their income to the Guru's treasury.<sup>72</sup> Since Sikhism is essentially a religion of the householders, Guru Arjan was not oblivious of their family obligations. He therefore exhorted his followers to settle at Amritsar and start new trades such as banking, embroidery, carpentry and horse trading.<sup>73</sup> Horse trade was quite a lucrative business in those days. It was considered a religious sin for a Hindu to cross the river Indus for trading with the adjoining Muslim countries in those days. Guru Arjan seems to have broken this religious taboo when he encouraged foreign travels particularly in the Muslim countries as is evident from H.R. Gupta's description, "In the time of Guru Arjan the Sikhs visited west Asian countries in search of horses of the finest breed. Thereby they gained valuable experience in the art of practical living and human relations as well as earning money through the lucrative trade in horses."<sup>74</sup> The view that the Guru's followers traded with

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71. Gurpartap Suraj Granth, op.cit., p. 2157.

72. Ibid., Ras 3, Ansu 51, p. 2147.

73. Gobind Singh Mansukhani, op.cit., pp. 21-22.

74. H.R. Gupta, op.cit., p. 310.

the Muslim countries across the river Indus is supported by Mansukhani who writes, "The Guru sent his followers to Turkestan for the purchase of horses which were subsequently sold in India. This brought a lot of money to the Sikhs and the Guru's treasury."<sup>75</sup> The statement of Mansukhani implies that Guru Arjan gave money to his followers for horse trade because it was a lucrative business in those days. The followers purchased the horses from Turkestan with the money given by the Guru and sold it with suitable profit. The profit so earned partly went in for repaying debts to the Guru and one tenth of the remaining amount (income) went to the Guru's treasury as a part of daswandh. The horse trade thus made the Sikhs not only rich international traders but also free from caste prejudices and religious taboos.

The Sikh interest in trade and commerce ~~was~~ further strengthened by the foundation by the Guru of series of towns and cities - Amritsar, Kartarpur, Tarn Taran and quite a few others, which "became centres not only of Sikh worship, prayer and pilgrimage but also of active trade and commerce."<sup>76</sup> But it may be pointed out that while doing so, the Guru's motive was to make the Sikhs economically

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75. Gobind Singh Mansukhani, op.cit., p. 22.

76. Niharanjan Ray, Sikh Gurus and the Sikh Society, p.40.

self sufficient and if possible independent to meet their personal as well as community requirements. Discouraging excess accumulation of wealth Guru Arjan said, "why amass what will not go with thee as thou proceedest, say why thou endeavourest to acquire what thou leaves behind."<sup>77</sup>

A person having adequate amount of money could attain peace of mind and poise but a wealthy man under the sway of riches may become self-centred, proud and avaricious, and on the contrary, poverty may reduce him to parasitic living. In both the cases life becomes unvirtuous. Elaborating further Guru Arjan thus advised the Sikhs to follow the middle path in the acquisition of wealth. He said that a man with huge wealth would get worried for its safety and security which would impinge upon his time and attention meant for meditation and service. But a man without sufficient amount could also not spare time for meditation and service as he would remain busy to obtain resources for his existence.<sup>78</sup> The Sikhs were thus made to content with the acquisition of adequate amount of money which could cater to their family and community living.

Preferring moderate financial means to either

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77. Adi Granth, Jaitsri-ki-var, pauri XX, c.f. Macauliffe, op.cit., p. 376.

78. ਜਿਸੁ ਗ੍ਰਿਹਿ ਬਹੁਤੁ, ਤਿਸੇ ਗ੍ਰਿਹਿ ਚਿੰਤਾ॥  
ਜਿਸ ਗ੍ਰਿਹਿ ਥੋਰੀ, ਸੇ ਫਿਰੈ ਭ੍ਰਮੰਤਾ॥  
ਦੁਗੁ ਵਿਵਸਥਾ ਤੇ ਜੇ ਮੁਕਤਾ, ਸੇਈ ਮੁਹੇਨਾ ਭਲੀਐ॥  
Ibid., Maru, M. 5, p. 1019.



riches and poverty, Guru Arjan not only viewed wealth a means of living but set out to the establishment of moral economic ethics conducive not only to ethical and simple living but also to the formulation of new business ethics. Himself belonging to a business family and also having a sizable number of his followers who were men of business, Guru Arjan rejected the costly rituals which not only hampered the growth of their business as that discouraged accumulation of capital but also hind<sup>e</sup>red intercommunal and inter-caste relationship so essential for the progress of business. Maintaining the flow of production which was controlled by the lower castes and then sale in the predominantly Muslim majority areas, it was essential to induct puritanical yet liberal life style among the Sikhs by liberating them from inhibiting rituals and practices. It is in this context that the message of Guru Arjan Dev might also be viewed for fresh insights.

Since it was a religious movement, the socio-religious aspect of Guru Arjan's message can not be ignored. It was intimately integrated with their economic activities. He perceived that the life of the Sikhs be organized and their environment be changed in such a way as should be conducive to the growth of moral life. With this purpose in view, he regulated both spiritual and secular

aspects of the life of the Sikhs, by making obligatory on them to visit the gurdwara, the sangat twice a day, before the start of work after ablution and after the cessation of work for offering their prayer.<sup>79</sup> The purpose was to keep them absorbed continuously with the communion with their Lord and to keep them detached from worldly pursuits. The regulation of leading simple and austere living was meant to make the Sikhs follow puritanical and virtuous life. But for the achievement of such a living, it was essential to have peace and harmony on the basis of well being and happiness of all. Therefore Guru Arjan created environment by providing the institution of gurdwara, gur-sangat, and the Sabad Guru (Adi Granth). The Sikhs learnt to seek the good of others without permitting others to interfere in their own affairs. It was a kind of autonomy which the community enjoyed in all aspects of life and in the process it led to the beginning of such developments which made Sikhism an independent religion. Guru Arjan thus moulded the outlook of the Sikhs and created a holistic vision in which a moral or ethical man in the moral community was liberated from the traditional ritualistic

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79. Bhai Santokh Singh, op.cit., Ras 29, Ansu 2, p. 1763; Macauliffe, op.cit., p.2; Punjabi Dunia, Guru Arjan Vishesh Ank (Patiala: Bhasha Vibhag, 1952), p.21.

hierarchical society and was made to interact with people belonging to all religions and castes without inhibition. This vision of the Guru of the Indian society cut across the castes and communal barriers, threatening the orthodoxy of both the Hindus and the Muslims of losing their hold on society of Punjab.

## CHAPTER VII

### MARTYRDOM: A TRYST WITH DESTINY

On May 30, 1606 (Jeth Shudi Chauth Samat 1663 B.K.)<sup>1</sup> there occurred a momentous event, the martyrdom of Guru Arjan Dev, in the history of the development of Sikhism. The nature of martyrdom is disputed among scholars of history. J.N. Sarkar, the foremost Indian authority on medieval history constructs the story and writes, "Arjan in a week moment blessed the banner of Khusro, the rival of Jahangir for Mughal throne and even gave money to that prince. On the defeat of the pretender, Jahangir fined the Guru two lacs of rupees for his disloyalty to the King, dejure. The Guru refused to pay the fine stoically endured imprisonment and torture which were the usual punishment of the revenue defaulters in those days."<sup>2</sup> Taking clue from J.N. Sarkar some scholars believe that "To the Mughals, Guru Arjan was dissident suspected of supporting the succession of prince Khusro who attempted to usurp the throne on the death of his grand father, but was defeated by his father, Jahangir."<sup>3</sup> On

1. Kesar Singh Chhiber, Bansavalinama Dasan Patshahian Ka, printed in Parkh, Research Bulletin of Panjabi Language and Literature (Chandigarh, Panjab University, Vol. II, 1972), p. 52; M.A. Macauliffe, The Sikh Religion, Its Gurus, Sacred Writings and Authors, 2nd edn. Indian (1919 rpt. New Delhi: S. Chand & Co., 1972), Vol. III, p. 110.
2. J.N. Sarkar, A Short History of Aurangzeb (Calcutta: M.C. Sarkar & Sons, 1916), p. 156.
3. W. Owen Cole & Piara Singh Sambhi, The Sikhs, Their Religious Beliefs and Practices (New Delhi: Vikas Publishing House Pvt. Ltd., 1978), p. 29.

almost similar grounds, S.M. Latif charges Guru Arjan Dev of "treason in having offered prayers for the success of Khusro, the Emperor's rebel son, who was in temporary possession of Panjab. He was thrown into a prison, and the emperor wished to extort a large sum of money from him (Arjan Dev) which the Guru was unable to pay. He was tortured and died of heat apoplexy."<sup>4</sup> Beni Prasad, Jahangir's biographer also attributes political motives behind this execution when he writes, "It is only fair to recognise that the whole affair amounts to single execution, due primarily to political reasons, no other Sikh was molested, no interdict was laid on the Sikh faith. Guru Arjan himself would have ended his days in peace if he had not espoused the cause of the rebel."<sup>5</sup> S.R. Sharma also supports this view stating, "Had Jahangir's persecution of the Guru been directed by religious motives, he would have persecuted the Sikhs as well. Neither Sikh tradition nor Muslim fanaticism tells us any thing of any further persecution of the Sikhs."<sup>6</sup>

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4. S.M. Latif, History of Punjab, latest edn. (1891 rpt. New Delhi: Eurasia Publishing House, 1964), p. 254.
  5. Beni Prasad, History of Jahangir, 2nd edn. (1940 rpt. Allahabad, The Indian Press, 1962), p. 138.
  6. S.R. Sharma, Religious Policy of the Mughal Emperors, (London: Oxford University Press, 1940), p. 77.

In view of the opinions expressed above, one can say that it was not a religious persecution but merely the customary punishment of a political offender or revenue defaulter as Jahangir was not pronouncedly against the Sikh religion as is evident from the fact that the Emperor had not persecuted the Sikh community. The scholars implicitly suggest that it was a deliberate attempt on the part of Guru Arjan as he neither paid the fine which probably he could nor did he allow the followers to raise the amount which they easily could. It appears that Guru Arjan's martyrdom was mainly a political case.<sup>7</sup>

But this view that Guru Arjan suffered because of being a political offender or got the customary punishment of a revenue defaulter, does not seem to hold any historical base in the light of the study and the analysis of the statement as recorded in Emperor's own autobiography, Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri, which state:

In Goindwal, which is on the river Biyah (Beas) there was a Hindu named Arjun, in the garments of sainthood and sanctity, so much so that he had captured many of the simple hearted of the Hindus, and even of the ignorant and foolish followers of Islam, by his ways and manners, and they had loudly sounded the drum of his holiness. They called him Guru, and from all sides stupid people crowded to worship and manifest complete faith in him. From three or four generations (of spiritual

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7. H.R. Gupta, History of the Sikh Gurus, (New Delhi: U.C. Kapoor and Sons, 1973), p. 104.

successors) they had kept this shop warm. Many times it occurred to me to put a stop to this vain affair or to bring him into the assembly of the people of Islam.<sup>8</sup>

From the above statement of Jahangir, two things are very explicit. One, the Sikhism had been flourishing and developing rapidly by the time of Guru Arjan, and he had become very popular and many Hindus and Muslims came under his influence and looked upon him as a great spiritual leader. This rapid development of Sikh movement and the conversion of the Muslims to the fold of Sikhism seems to have upset and irritated the Emperor Jahangir as is evident from the language which he used for such Muslim followers of the Guru and termed them as "ignorant and foolish." Two, it exposes the bigoted and narrow mind of the Emperor who could not bear the fast development of Sikhism and made up his mind to put an end to the 'vain affair' (Sikh movement) or to bring him, the leader of the movement, to the fold of Islam even before the outbreak of the revolt of Khusro.

As far as the popularity of the Sikh Guru and the development of Sikhism is concerned, it has already been mentioned that Guru Arjan gave a fabric of institutions and

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8. Rogers & Baveridge, trans. Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri, 2nd edn. (1909-1914 rpt. Delhi: Munshi Ram Manohar Lal, 1968), 9p. 72.

practices and a new outlook which consolidated Sikhism and attracted many Hindus and Muslims to the fold of Sikhism as was admitted by the Emperor himself.<sup>9</sup> Evidently feeling upset, he decided to interfere in the development of Sikhism and put an end to this 'vain affair'.<sup>10</sup> It is thus very explicit from the analysis of the statement of Jahangir that he had already made up his mind to punish the Guru or to convert him to the fold of Islam even before the revolt of Khusro; the Khusro episode gave an opportunity of taking such a drastic action against the Guru not because the Guru was a political offender, but because the Sikh movement was flourishing and developing at a very rapid speed under the pontification of Guru Arjan Dev, and many Hindus and Muslims were coming to his fold and accepting him as their spiritual Guru. Moreover, the authenticity of Guru's hand in revolt of Khusro might also be gauged from the study and analysis of the other statement of Jahangir. At one place he writes:

At last when Khusrau passed along this road this insignificant fellow proposed to wait upon him. Khusrau happened to halt at the place where he was, and he came out and did homage to him. He behaved to Khusrau in certain

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9. He had captured many of the simple hearted of the Hindus and even of the ignorant and foolish followers of Islam, by his ways and manners, and they had loudly sounded the drum of his holiness. (See Rogers & Beveridge, op.cit., p.72).

10. Ibid., p. 72.



special ways and made on his forehead a finger mark in saffron, which the Indians (Hindu-wan) call qashqa and is considered propitious. When this came to my ears and I clearly understood his folly, I ordered them to produce him and handed over his houses, dwelling places, and children to Murtaza Khan, and having confiscated his property commanded that he should be put to death<sup>11</sup> (Yasa with Syast) with torture.

From the above statement of Jahangir, it is evident that two charges are levelled against the Guru; one, that Guru Arjan met prince Khusro when he passed through Goindwal; and two, he gave a special treatment to Khusro as he applied tilak on his forehead in saffron which is considered propitious in Hindu tradition. On the basis of these charges, the Emperor passed very clear orders of his sentence of death with torture. But there is no inkling of any fine imposed upon the Guru or death commutation in the form of two lakhs of fine. There is no reference of Chandu Shah in any capacity or any role connected with the execution of the Guru.

As to the first charge that Guru Arjan had met prince Khusro at Goindwal, it is disputed among the writers and historians. According to Bhai Vir Singh, Guru Arjan as a matter of fact had no meeting with prince Khusro as is

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11. Ibid., pp. 72-73.

evident from the narration of events with regard to Khusro's revolt.<sup>12</sup> According to him, Jahangir records in his autobiography that, on 16th Jilhaz (April 14), he was at serai Kazi, on 17th (April 15) he reached Sultanpur, and stayed there upto noon. Then <sup>he</sup> reached Goindwal across the river where he got the news of Khusro's defeat. Proceeding further stage by stage, he reached Jhabal on 28th A.H. (26th April). This place is situated at a distance of seven kos from Lahore.<sup>13</sup> Thus Jahangir remained in Majha territories for twelve days from 17th to 28th Jilhaz (April 15 to April, 26), 1606 A.D. but he did not get any news regarding Guru Arjan's meeting with Prince Khusro, notwithstanding the fact that he was getting full information with regard to Khusro during his pursuit including the news of Nizam Thanesri's meeting with the Prince. Bhai Vir Singh is of the firm opinion that the Guru's meeting with the Prince, could have not escaped the attention of the Emperor during those twelve days' when he was in the Majha territory, where the Emperor's spies and other complainants were working

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12. Bhai Vir Singh, Ashat Gur Chamtkar arthat Jeevan Parsang Sahib Guru Arjan Dev Ji (Amritsar: Khalsa Samachar, 1968), p. 90.

13. The Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri, op.cit., pp. 63-68.

zealously with a hope to get suitable reward for their services.<sup>14</sup> Moreover, Raja Basu was sent after Khusro the very day the prince revolted against his father to procure information about the prince and to capture him. It seems very strange that Raja Basu who was a Punjabi, too could not get any information regarding Guru's meeting with the Prince, and this is very improbable, observes Bhai Vir Singh, that the Emperor could not procure any information whether or not the Guru had met Prince Khusro while passing through Sultanpur, Goindwal, and his twelve-day wandering in the Majha tract.<sup>15</sup>

It is evident from the Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri, that the Emperor left Jhabal on April 27 and reached Mirza Kamran Bagh (Garden), near Lahore where he got the news of Khusro's defeat at Lahore and his capture on the bank of Sodhra. On the fourth day on third Muharram 1015 A.H. (May, 1), Khusro was produced before the Emperor. Here Khusro's two chief companions Hussain Beg and Abdu-r-Rahim were awarded punishment and sewen into raw hides of an ox and an ass respectively. Several hundred of Khusro's soldiers who were made captives were put to death.<sup>16</sup>

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14. Bhai Vir Singh, op.cit., pp. 90-91.

15. Ibid.

16. Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri, op.cit., pp. 68-69.

But it is surprising and unimaginable that still the Emperor did not receive any information regarding the Guru's meeting with Prince Khusro. According to Ganda Singh, a noted Sikh historian, the Emperor free from any worry attended to the official business of the empire including the despatch of reinforcement of Shah Beg Khan, Governor of Kandhar, against the threatened attack of Hussain Khan. He rewarded a number of nobles for the meritorious services and granted to them high ranks and cash awards.<sup>17</sup> It was after thirteen more days after having punished the rebels that the Emperor suddenly received report after 22nd Muharram (20 May, 1606), on or about 23rd May regarding Guru's meeting with the Prince.<sup>18</sup>

Basing their argument on the gap period, some Sikh historians have tried to build a plausible case that Guru Arjan was involved in the whole episode as they believe

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17. Being pleased with his prediction, the Emperor also ordered the sum of twenty lakh dams equivalent to thirty-forty thousand rupees to be paid to Shaikh Hussain Jani for the maintenance of his Khanqah and the darveshes living there. On the 22nd of Muharram (May, 20), the emperor also raised the Mansab of Abdulla Khan and granted an advance of two lakhs of rupees for the Ahdis. Rupees six thousand were thus paid to Qasim Beg Khan, son-in-law of Badshah Beg Khan, and three thousand to Sayyid Bahadur Khan. The Emperor also decided to stay on at Lahore to ward off the danger to Kandhar and to pay a visit to Kabul. He also in the meantime called from Agra his son Parvez and also his own mother and the ladies of his harem.

Ganda Singh, "The Martyrdom of Guru Arjan Dev", Panjab Past and Present, (Patiala: Punjabi University, Vol. XII-I, No. 23, April 1978), p. 164.

18. Bhai Vir Singh, op.cit., p. 91.

that if the incident of Guru's meeting with the Prince had been based on historical facts, then the Emperor would have received the information of the meeting well in time. Thus the news which poured into the ears of the Emperor after thirteen days of the disposal of cases pertaining to the Khusro's revolt, was deliberate concoction and a conspiracy hatched by Guru's enemies.<sup>19</sup> Commenting on this issue, Ganda Singh remarks that this was practically a month after the Guru was alleged to have blessed the prince and some twenty seven days after the Emperor himself had crossed the Beas at that very place. This makes the whole thing a puzzle and raises a very serious doubt on the genuiness<sup>ne</sup> and authenticity of the report. The fact that for twenty seven days from April 26, when the Emperor appears to have crossed the Beas at Goindwal and was encamped at Jhabal upto May 22, there is no reference whatsoever in the Tuzuk in any way involving Guru Arjan in the affairs of Prince Khusro or any one of his accomplices. If the Guru had met and blessed Khusro at Goindwal, it would certainly have been reported to the Emperor on the spot or its immediate neighbourhood where it could have been easily verified and authenticated by the eye witnesses and the

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19. Ibid., pp. 91-92.

Guru would have been arrested and carried as a prisoner with him to Lahore.<sup>20</sup> The early Sikh chronicle, the Bansavalinama also does not mention anything about the incident of Khusro. Moreover, the nature of the report in itself is vague and is not based on eye-witness account. Even the name of the person or persons who are alleged to have informed Jahangir is not indicated.

As to the second charge of conveying preconceived things and applying teeka, it may be pointed out that the Guru was not a politician to be interested in the rebellion of Prince Khusro and that too against his father who had been on the throne for six months, nor had the Prince met the Guru after the accession of his father to prompt the Guru to have any preconceived things to be conveyed to him. As far as qashqa or teeka mark of saffron by the Guru on the forehead of Prince, it is, on the face of it, a pure and simple concoction of some conspirators' fertile imagination to exploit the Emperor against the Guru. Never in the whole history of the Sikh Gurus, there has been any occasion for any Guru to annoint any Sikh or non-Sikh with a teeka.<sup>21</sup> It may also be pointed out that no tilak or teeka was applied to Emperor Akbar when he visited the third and

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20. Ganda Singh, loc. cit., p. 164-165.

21. Ibid.,

fifth Guru respectively. Bansavalinama, an early Sikh tradition, not to speak of narrating the teeka ceremony, has not even mentioned anything with regard to Guru's connection with Prince Khusro in any manner. Similarly, Sarup Dass Bhalla of Goindwal, the author of Mahima Prakash, makes no mention of any teeka on Khusro's head, but mentions that the Guru provided him with the food from Guru's langar which was open to all.<sup>22</sup> The author of Dabistan-i-Mazahib also makes no mention of any teeka ceremony on the forehead of Prince Khusro but states that Arjan was arrested and fined for the reason that he had prayed for the welfare of Prince Khusro.<sup>23</sup> Here too, he does not elaborate whether the prayer was for the victory of the Prince or just offered good wishes in a traditional manner as the holy persons bless when the people visit them and pay their homage. Since in Sikhism there is no place for a son who rebels against his father, nor there was any animosity or a cause of conflict between the Guru and the Emperor, therefore, it may be logically premised that the Guru could not have offered his good wishes.

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22. Sarup Dass Bhalla, Mahima Parkash (Patiala: Bhasha Vibhag, 1971), pp. 410-411.

23. Guru Nanak and Nanak Panthis, Extract translated into English by Ganda Singh, Panjab Past & Present (Patiala: Punjabi University, Vol. I, 1967), p. 59.

Thus, the two charges which were levelled against the Guru by the Emperor can not be proved historically, but the Emperor in his religious zeal to punish the Guru tried to authenticate the report when poured into his ears, saying that "I clearly understood his folly".<sup>24</sup> On the basis of this report and the charges which had no historical basis, as discussed above, the Emperor passed conspicuous orders against Arjan Dev, to produce him and hand over his houses, dwelling place and children to Murtaza Khan, and having confiscated his property commanded that he should be put to death<sup>25</sup> with torture, for he had already made up his mind "to put a stop to this vain affair (Sikhism) or to bring him (leader of the movement) into the assembly of Islam."<sup>26</sup> Thus the Guru's hand in the revolt of Khusro was a mere concoction to punish the Guru. The bitterest enemy of the Guru was Mujaddid-i-Alif-i-Sani popularly known as Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi (1563-1624 A.D.) who had started the Naqashbandi revivalist movement in Punjab. It is evident from his letter addressed to Shaikh Farid Bukhari popularly known as Murtaza Khan<sup>27</sup> after the execution of Guru Arjan Dev. The reasons of the Mujaddid

24. Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri, op.cit., p.72.

25. Ibid., p. 73.

26. Ibid., p. 72.

27. The execution of the accursed Kafir of Goindwal at this time is a very good achievement indeed and has become the cause of a great defeat of the hateful Hindus. With whatever intentions they are killed and with whatever objectives they are destroyed, it is a meritorious act for the Muslims. (See: Ahmad Sirhindi, Shaikh Mujaddid-i-Alif-i-Sani, Muktubat-i-Imam-Rabbani, (Amritsar: Roz Bazar Press, 1909-16; Lahore: Noor Company, 1964, Vol.I. Part iii), letter no. 193, pp. 95-96.



being particularly inimical towards Guru Arjan are not far to seek, observes, Ganda Singh. The Mujaddid was a zealous preacher of the puritanic Islam and keen to see the supermacy and the superiority of Islamic faith of the holy prophet of Mecca established in Mughal Empire. But he could not see his dream materialise in the face of vast population professing non-Muslim faith. In the Panjab, the non-Muslims were either the declared followers of the Sikh faith or were increasingly attracted towards it through the life and teachings of Guru Arjan Dev,<sup>28</sup> as is evident from the statement of Jahangir<sup>29</sup> and the account of Dabistan-i-Mazahib which records:

In short, during the time of each Mahal (Guru), the Sikhs increased in number till the reign of Guru Arjan Mal they became numerous, and there were not many cities in the inhabited countries where some Sikhs were not to be found.... In the time of Mahals before the fifth Mahal, no bhet (offering) or tribute was collected from the Sikhs... During his time Arjan Mal deputed one person to the Sikhs of every city so that he might collect tribute and offerings from them. (This deputy or agent was called Masand). People began to become the Sikhs of the Guru through the medium of Masands. The Chief Masands, through whom large numbers became Sikhs of the Guru....<sup>30</sup>

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28. Ganda Singh, loc. cit., p. 172.

29. Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri, op.cit., p. 72.

30. Guru Nanak and Nanak Panthis, op.cit., pp. 52-53.

The Muslim fundamentalist had been feeling disturbed for some time owing to the liberal and secular policies of the Emperor Akbar but with the accession of Jahangir to the throne in 1605, the situation changed as is evident from Mujaddid's letter written to Murtaza Khan, at the death of Akbar and the accession of Jahangir to the Mughal throne who was bestowed with the title of 'King of Islam'.<sup>31</sup> The Muslim fundamentalists thus now got the opportunity to intrigue and conspire against Guru Arjan as "the Emperor had ascended the throne with their help."<sup>32</sup> Moreover, Shaikh Sirhindi was extremely jealous of the growing popularity of the Guru and the rapid development of Sikhism because "the growth of Sikhism blocked the further progress of Islam in Panjab."<sup>33</sup> An adherent of revivalism of Islam, Shaikh Sirhindi made revivalism of something of a movement. He incited Jahangir against Guru Arjan when he was called on by the latter in pursuit of Khusro. It is believed that

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31. "Today when the news of the death of the denier of the superiority of Islam and of joyful accession of the King of Islam was heard by the people, the followers of Islam considered it obligatory on their part to extend their support to the King and to work and guide for the propagation of the holy law of Islam and for the reinforcement of religion. (Shaikh Mujaddid-i-Alif-i-Sani, op.cit., part ii, letter 47, p. 22).
32. R.P. Tfrpathi, Rise and Fall of the Mughal Empire, (Allahabad: Central Book Dept., 1956); Ganda Singh, loc. cit., p. 163; Beni Prasad, op.cit., pp. 51, 61-62.
33. Fauja Singh, al. Sikhism, ed. L.M. Joshi (Patiala: Punjabi University, 1969), p. 19.

the Shaikh had also great influence on the courtiers of Jahangir.<sup>34</sup> It was under the influence and <sup>on the</sup> advice of Murtaza Khan, the devout follower and the advocate of the fanatical and the intolerant revivalist, the Mujaddid of Sirhind that Emperor Jahangir had pledged to act as the defender of Islam against the religious activities of non-Muslims of the country.<sup>35</sup> Guru Arjan Dev's case was the first test for him to prove his bonafide. Therefore, most Sikh historians contend that this was the outcome of pre-planned conspiracy which the Naqashbandis hatched against the Guru in order to persecute him. Ganda Singh therefore is of the opinion that this complaint against the Guru might have been thus made directly or indirectly by some agent of Mujaddid or of Shaikh Farid Bukhari.<sup>36</sup>

As far <sup>as</sup> the sentence is concerned, the Emperor recorded in a very clear sentence that the Guru's property be confiscated and he be put to death with torture. In the wake of this capital punishment, there arises no question of imposition of any fine in any manner, nor there is any inkling with regard to the commutation of death sentence in

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34. M. Mujeeb, The Indian Muslims (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1967), p. 162.

35. Beni Prasad, op.cit., pp. 51, 61-62.

36. Ganda Singh, loc. cit., p. 171.

the form of heavy fine recorded in Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri. But still some writers and scholars narrate the incident of imposition of fine on the Guru, and according to them its non-payment led to his martyrdom. According to the author of Dabistan, when Jahangir, after the arrest of Khusro, arrested and fined Guru Arjan for the reasons that he had prayed for the welfare of the Prince, they demanded an enormous sum from him. The Guru was unable to pay. Having imprisoned him, they kept him in the sandy deserts of Lahore. Because of the heat of the Sun, the severity of the summer and the torture of the bailiffs, Guru Arjan died.<sup>37</sup> The Mahima Parkash also mentions about the imposition of fine of two lakhs which was originally suggested by Chandu Shah, Chakar (servant) of the Emperor when he reported <sup>to</sup> the Emperor that Guru Arjan entertained the rebellious Prince for a night and helped him with some money (Khazana)... But when the Guru was produced before the Emperor, the Emperor remained silent and said nothing good or bad.<sup>38</sup>

Thus it may be pointed out that beyond the suggestion of Chandu at the earliest stage of the report, before the despatch of the royal orders for the purpose and the arrest

37. Guru Nanak and Nanak Panthis, op.cit., p.59.

38. Sarup Das Bhalla, op.cit., p. 411.

of the Guru, there is no mention even in the Mahima Parkash, of the Emperor having issued orders for the imposition of fine upon the Guru. Commenting on the fine, Indubhushan Banerjee observes that the Emperor does not say anything about the huge fine which, both Mohsin Fani and Sikh chroniclers assert, he wanted to extort from Guru Arjan and the forcible realization of which appears to have been the purpose with which inhuman tortures were inflicted on the Guru.<sup>39</sup>

In fact, much of the confusion has been caused by the fact that Jahangir in his autobiography, after recording the circumstances of the martyrdom of Guru Arjan, narrates in the subsequent para another event about two other persons Raju and Amba who terrorised the people during the rebellion of Khusro. The Emperor ordered Raju to be hanged and Amba a richman, to be fined, and as such one lakh and fifteen thousand of rupees were received from him.<sup>40</sup> Both these orders about the Guru and about these two persons seem to have been issued and executed at the same time. The people in the streets of Lahore either out of ignorance or someone's wilful campaign to absolve the Emperor, connected the two events and attributed the fine actually levied upon Amba

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39. Indubhushan Banerjee, Evolution of Khalsa, Vol. II, 2nd edn. (1947 rpt. Calcutta: A. Mukherjee & Co., 1962), p. 5.

40. Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri, op.cit., pp. 72-73.

alongwith the orders of death passed against Guru Arjan and thus, observes Ganda Singh, this unhistorical news came to be widely circulated and some scholars also accepted it. Not only the mid-seventeenth century, author of Dabistan-i-Mazahib believed it but the Sikh writer of the Mahima Prakash in the second half of the eighteenth century also partially accepted this version.<sup>41</sup>

Thus we may come to the conclusion that Guru Arjan suffered not because he was a political offender or revenue defaulter as believed by J.N. Sarkar, S.M. Latif, Beni Prasad, S.R. Sharma and many others, but because of his growing popularity as an undisputed leader of the Sikh movement under whom the Sikhs flourished and consolidated by evolving religious institutions such as Adi Granth, Harimandir and the institution of masand with a set of new practices evolved around these institutions for the routinization of the social and religious life of the Sikhs. As a consequence of these measures, Guru Arjan could concretize the Sikh organization by providing the sacred Granth, central place of worship, and an organisation in the form of masand system for the integration and consolidation of sangats and made the Sikh Church financially selfsufficient for the maintenance

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41. Ganda Singh, loc. cit., p. 176.

of these institutions, and taking in hand the other projects of the community. At the same time, the institution of the masand also went a long way in bringing a large number of people in the fold of Sikhism as is quite evident from the account of Dabistan-i-Mazahib.

Besides the increase in number of the Sikhs as a consequence of the impact of the institutionalization of the Sikh movement, these institutions were also made the nucleus of the new socio-religious customs and practices for instance, in respect of marriage customs and rituals, death rites, pilgrimages etc., they rejected the elaborate priestly customs, rites and rituals and replaced them by much simpler and much less costlier rituals.<sup>42</sup> Guru Arjan also founded and created cities like Amritsar, Tarn Taran, Kartarpur and Hargobindpur as new centres of the Sikh faith for his followers which soon became new centres of worship and destined to replace the traditional pilgrimages of the Hindus.<sup>43</sup> Thus with the emergence of these institutions with distinct set of Sikh practices, separate places of their worship under the undisputed leadership of the Guru, the Sikhism not only acquired separate identity of its own from that of Hinduism and Islam but also assumed the character of separate religion which had become self-generating, and self-accelerating. The

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42. Niharanjan Ray, The Sikh Guru and the Sikh Society, Patiala: Punjabi University, 1970), p.70.

43. Ibid., p. 71.

Sikhs had become, a more or less, compact community, in command of an efficient and extensive organisation. The well-knit organisation of the sangat and the masand not only kept the "Sikhs together and in touch with their leader, but also provided them with funds necessary for common purposes..."<sup>44</sup> But it may be pointed out that "this spectacle of a religious teacher at the head of such an extensive organisation and with a body of followers who had been taught that to sacrifice their all for the Guru was the highest and the most meritorious act, and whose sense of brotherhood and love for each other transcended all other feelings, could not but disturb the equanimity of the established state and clearly a crisis was coming when a direct conflict would be difficult to avoid..."<sup>45</sup> Besides, the popularity of the Guru and the rapid development of the Sikh movement posed a serious threat to the Islamization in Panjab. The Sikh Guru and the Sikh movement were considered a great hindrance in the work and progress of the revivalist movement as their plans of Islamization were not carried out because of the great influence of the Guru and the rapid development of Sikhism. With the progress of Sikhism, which was also a missionary creed like Islam, the pace of Islamization was considerably slowed down, if not halted. The prospects of improved status to the Hindus were

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44. Indubhushan Banerjee, op.cit., p. 5.

45. Ibid., pp. 5-6.



now available from Sikhism as well, because Sikhism, too, like Islam made no distinction between the high and the low. In so far as Sikhism was closer to the roots of the Hindu culture, for the Hindu masses it had a better appeal over Islam. Therefore, those who wanted to change their religion with a view to improving their position in the society preferred Sikhism to Islam.<sup>46</sup> Thus the Sikh movement narrowed down the field from where the Shaikh Sirhindi, the leader of the Naqashbandi movement was to secure his converts. All these trends naturally alarmed the Emperor and the Naqashbandis who thought of putting an end to 'the vain affair' (Sikhism) or converting him (the leader of the movement) into Islam. The Gurus complicity in the revolt of Khusro was thus invented just to camouflage the drastic punishment often given to political offenders. But it may be pointed out that while doing so Jahangir did not want merely to punish a person (Arjan Dev) as is contended by Beni Prasad and S.R. Sharma<sup>47</sup> but he wanted to put a stop to what he regarded as 'vain affair' the propagation of Sikh movement which flourished for three or four generations. It was thus a declared assault not on an individual but on the Sikh movement as a whole which

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46. Fauja Singh, op.cit., p.19.

47. Beni Prasad, op.cit., p. 138; S.R. Sharma, op.cit., p. 77.

posed a direct challenge to the theocratic state.<sup>48</sup> It may also be pointed out that the evidence of persecuting the leader (nucleus) of a movement are available in Jahangir's reign.<sup>49</sup>

It may thus be concluded that Guru Arjan suffered not because he was a political offender or was a revenue defaulter, but because of his growing popularity as head of the Sikh movement, the development and consolidation of Sikhism as a consequence of organizing popular institution and routinization of their beliefs with new socio-religious Sikh practices and the establishment of centres of worship, for they aroused the religious bigotry of the Emperor;<sup>50</sup> and the Naqashbandis who conspired and intrigued together to put an end to 'the vain affair' (Sikh movement) by putting

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48. Jagjit Singh, The Sikh Revolution (New Delhi: Bahri Publications Pvt. Ltd., 1981), p. 161.

49. Shaikh Ibrahim Baba was an Afghan who had opened a religious establishment (lit. one being Shaikh and having disciples) in the neighbourhood of Lahore. According to Jahangir, his doings were disreputable and foolish as considerable number of Afghans collected round him. The emperor ordered him to be brought and handed over to Parvez to be kept in the fort of Chunar; so this vain disturbance was put to an end to. (See: Rogers & Baveridge, op.cit., p. 77).

50. Many times it occurred to me to put a stop this vain affair or to bring him with the assembly of the people of Islam (See: Ibid., p. 72).

its popular and dynamic leader Guru Arjan to death under any lame pretext as is evident from the letter of Mujaddid-Alif-i-Sani, addressed to Murtaza Khan, the Governor of Lahore after the death of Guru Arjan:

The execution of the accursed Kafir of Goindwal at this time is very good achievement indeed and has become the cause of a great defeat of the hateful Hindus. With whatever intentions they are killed and with whatever objective they are destroyed, it is a meritorious act for the Muslims. Before the Kafir was killed, I had seen in a dream that the Emperor of the day had destroyed the Crown of the head of the Shirk or infidelity. It is true that this infidel was the chief of the infidels and a leader of the Kafirs...<sup>51</sup>

It was believed that the Sikh movement would die its natural death with the death of its dynamic leader and especially when the Sikh movement would pass on under the direction and leadership of his minor son Hargobind who was then only a child of eleven years of age.

The available contemporary sources - the Adi Granth, the Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri and the Varan of Bhai Gurdas do not throw any light on the manner in which Guru Arjan was tortured to death. But the Sikh chroniclers like the authors of Bansavalinama Dasan Patshahian Ka, Gur Bilas Patshahi Chhevin and Gurpartap Suraj Granth, unanimously state that

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51. Shaikh Mujaddid-i-Alif-i-Sani, op.cit., part iii, letter 193, pp. 95-96.

Guru Arjan before leaving Amritsar in response to the call of the Emperor, perceived that his end was imminent. He consequently appointed Guru Hargobind as his successor.<sup>52</sup> Similar view is expressed by some modern historians as well.<sup>53</sup> It is said that he had told his wife that his end was imminent.<sup>54</sup> This kind of premonition indicates that Guru Arjan was very strong in conviction and ready for self sacrifice.<sup>55</sup>

According to the authority of the Dabistan, "Having arrested him (the Guru), they kept him in the sandy deserts of Lahore. From the heat of the sun, the severity of summer and the tortures of the bailiffs, he gave his life."<sup>56</sup> In the hottest month of May, he was chained to a post in an open place exposed to the Sun from morning till evening. He was made to sit and stand and lie on hot sand and boiling water was thrown on his body which caused blisters over his body.<sup>57</sup> There is <sup>a</sup>very popular tradition that he was taken

52. Bansavalinama Dasan Patshahian Ka, op.cit., p.54;  
Gur Bilas Patshahi Chhevin, op.cit., p. 127;  
Sri Gurpartap Suraj Granth, op.cit., pp. 2347-2348.
53. Jagjit Singh, op.cit., pp. 163-164.
54. M.L. Peace, op.cit., p. 58.
55. According to Vilfredo Pareto, the new social forms were established by those whom he called lions, strong in conviction and ready for self sacrifice (Vilfredo Pareto, The Mind and the Society, ed. Arthur Livingstone (New York: Brace and World, 1935), Vol. I, pp. 1515-1516.
56. Nanak Panthis, Extract translated from Dabistan-i-Mazahib by Ganda Singh published in Panjab Past & Present, Vol. I, 1967, p. 60.
57. H.R. Gupta, op.cit., p.103.

to river Ravi<sup>58</sup> for a dip in order to inflict<sup>upon</sup> him more torture where he breathed his last. It was a tryst with manifest destiny and symbolic merger of man with the movement.

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58. This fact is borne out by Rattan Singh Bhangu that 'Kia Guru daryai na Roryo (was not Guru Arjan thrown into the river?) (See Prachin Panth Parkash, 3rd edn. (1914 rpt. Amritsar: Khalsa Samachar, 1952), p. 534); Sohan Lal Suri, Court Diarist of Maharaja Ranjit Singh also records in Umdat-ut-Twarikh that "Having subjected him to number of hardships they threw the saint (Guru Arjan) into river Ravi." (Q.f. Sahib Singh, Jeevan Virtant Sri Guru Arjan Dev Ji, op.cit., p. 77); Kesar Singh Chhiber also support this view that "tied up he was thrown into the river Ravi." (See Bansavalinama Dasan Patshahian Ka, op.cit., p. 54); The evidence of these independent sources demolish the fiction that "Guru Arjan sought leave to bath in the river Ravi, he vanished in the shallow stream, to the fear and wonder of those guarding him." For detail see Joseph Davey Cunningham, History of the Sikhs Indian edn. (1849 rpt. New Delhi: S. Chand & Co., 1955), p. 48.

## CHAPTER VIII

### CONCLUSIONS

Unlike any primitive religion, the Sikh religious thought is highly developed and so universal and moral that it had the potentialities of developing into one of the major religions of the world.<sup>1</sup> Without going into the arguments which are more polemical and hypothetical than historical, it may be mentioned here that like the other currents of Bhakti movement, Sikhism also began as a revolt against the highly hierarchical rigid social system of the Hindus. Therefore, the significance of the Sikh movement must not be viewed as much in its break with the religious thought of the past, as in providing an alternative social model to the existing one.

On reaching a historical stage wherein internal tension, and external changes had acquired bold overtones necessitating a radical action on the part of Guru Arjan, for otherwise, there was a danger of Sikh movement deviating from the basic theme imparted by Guru Nanak. Guru Arjan Dev consolidated the Sikh movement by providing stable institutional forms which permitted ongoing day-to-day activity to function smoothly. Since, religious experience concerns

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1. Arnold J. Toynbee, A Study of History, 3rd edn. (1954 rpt. London: Oxford University Press, 1961), Vol. VI, p. 239.

itself with the awareness and response of the transempirical fluid and fleeting moment which is captured by the few who have intuitive and imaginative grasp of the totality, it is always necessary for the cohesion among the followers to integrate that fleeting and fluid moment with the institutional structure and patterns of the daily life in terms of practices and rituals.

Evaluation of the significance of the work of Guru Arjan Dev poses a few pertinent problems with regard to the situation in terms of institutional development and theoretical formulations. The foremost among them was the Guru's relationship with the adherents. In view of the challenge of detractors like Prithi Chand whose claims to the gur-gaddi, on the basis of being the eldest son were traditionally sound and as such could blur the attraction of the Guru, it was apprehended that the Guru would fail to satisfy the complex needs of the followers, particularly the psychological ones. To maintain the purity of the content of the message of the early Gurus, Guru Arjan Dev raised a stable institutional matrix capable of eliciting obedience to the nucleus i.e. the Guru himself or a comparable institution as the Adi Granth or the two together. Moreover, the need for stable institutionalization increased correspondingly to the increase in the number of the followers which included among them of

weaker and unstable will and whose management and mobilization necessitated greater institutionalization.

Besides the family feuds, efforts were afoot to corrupt and interpolate the message of the earlier gurus as there was no standard book for worship. With regard to the Goindwal pothis existing prior to the compilation of the Adi Granth, it may be mentioned that the basic teachings of the gurus and the bhaktas were freely incorporated and the dissenters like Prithi Chand got a granth prepared with incorporation of his own hymns in the name of Nanak. Taking a clue from Ernst Troeltsch's theory that at the end of the original charismatic period the necessity arises to standardise the message and raise the structure of ecclesiastical institutions for the routinization of sect that denominates into a religious order. And it may be logically surmised that Sikhism, because of enlargement of the number of its followers at the advent of Guru Arjan Dev's pontification, had reached such a stage in its evolution.

Moreover, the family feuds and the expanding order of the adherents had not only caused crises in the psychological sense but also in the experiential sense as there was always an apprehension of constant diffusion of response<sup>men</sup> of

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2. Ernst Troeltsch, The Social Teachings of the Christian Churches, Olive Wyon, trans. (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1931) Vol. II, pp. 999-1000.



the followers on the experiential level. Under these circumstances the response of the adherents i.e. the Sikhs required imparting of objectified expressions to communicate and transmit from generation to generation. The most significant among the objectified expressions evolved by Sikhism were the creation of rituals of worship, places of worship and objects of worship. They are always central to any organized religion, for it is through them that a follower integrates himself with the ecclesiastical order and saves himself from social alienation. With this object in mind Guru Arjan Dev innovated, elaborated and standardised the institutions by defining rights, obligations and relationship of his followers within the Sikh institutional framework. To avoid over-bureaucratization, which, however, became a malady in the Sikh organization at the time of Guru Gobind Singh, Guru Arjan imparted higher status to non-personal authority, the Adi Granth than to his own self, and thus he initiated the de-institutionalization process of the person of the Guru which climaxed at the time of Guru Gobind Singh in the creation of the Khalsa.

Guru Arjan interrelated and identified the institutions of the Adi Granth and the gurdwara with the institution of the guru underlying the spiritual theme that sabad or the bani is the guru in Sikhism. It was this form of God which was absorbed

in the form of Guru Nanak to be revealed and transmitted from one Guru to another till it was finally merged in the Granth. Thus the bani as composed by the gurus was viewed as the revealed one and was identified with the Primal Guru, God. The codified Granth which is the repository of the bani of the Sikh Gurus and the other bhaktas was made the embodiment of the visible form of God. Therefore, Guru Arjan Dev evolved a series of religious rituals and practices around the nucleus of the Adi Granth and made it the object of worship. Its abode, the gurdwara, was made the place of worship. He also made it a religious ritual with the Sikhs to visit the gurdwara for congregational worship and prayer which assisted in regulating the socio-religious behaviour of the Sikhs, giving overtones of distinct characteristics to their community.

The institution of sangat was strengthened by Guru Arjan Dev around the nucleus of the basic institutions of the guru and the Adi Granth and its abode gurdwara emerged as a very potent vehicle for the realization of self. The masand and the langar institutions were the component institutions of the sangat organization which were meant to consolidate and strengthen the Sikh community by imparting unity and cohesion. The langar institution

not only catered to the physical need of the sangat but also imparted a secular dimension to the latter, translating the percept of equality in practice by making it obligatory for all the members to sit in the same pangat and eat the same food without any discrimination of caste, community, status, or prejudices of sex or pollution. In the process, it helped in forging bond of unity among the members of the Sikh sangat. Similarly, masand institution was of immense value in organizing and consolidating the Sikh sangats spread over vast area both in India and outside it as the masand became the living link with the Guru and the sangat. It was also through the institution of masand that the number of the Sikh sangats increased to a large extent, and the Sikh Church became financially independent and it became possible for the Guru to maintain the community langar regularly, and undertake the construction work of the tanks and baolis and other religious centres at Tarn Taran, Kartarpur etc. It was also with the initiative of the masands that various sangat units accompanied them to their holy shrine Harimandir for having a sight of the Guru and seeking his blessings when they visited the Guru to render account of their collection of the daswandh. But what is more important to note is that various sangat units thus had the opportunity of coming into close contact with each other which were otherwise separated by distance. This

forged a bond of unity in Sikh sangats. Thus the institutions of masand and langar were vibrant in activity and proved very useful in the development, consolidation and strengthening the Sikh sangats.

It is unanimously agreed and also is a historical truism that the import of the message gets transformed according to the changing historical situation and as such relevant to a particular age in which it is interpreted. Therefore, it can be argued that there is always a danger of distraction or change adversely affecting the religious ethics of the community. To retain the original purity and ethical insight, institutions were established and practices were innovated. In this direction, Guru Arjan Dev took the most essential and significant step by standardising the Sikh scripture in the form of Adi Granth and thus terminating the process of change in the message of the gurus. He concretized and routinized the religious ethics for making it operational in the lives of the adherents.

Belief, morals and attitudes have symbolic abstract meanings which can be studied in terms of actions. Therefore, they are transformed into practices, rituals and ceremonies. It is in this context that they are related to values and social institutions. The followers of the Guru were scattered over a vast area, and as such there was an

apprehension of loosening of the ties with the sacred authority. Therefore, occasions and institutions were created for family and group ceremonies for the reinforcement of group solidarity; expansion of the group and strengthening of relationship with the nucleus i.e. the Guru. Thus the superstructure of norms permeates through institutions and practices, the family organization, the marriage and birth ceremonies and death rites and extends to many other inter-personal relationship of the community.

It has been generally viewed that such a process of socialization of <sup>the</sup> individual tends to restrict his voluntriness, but it also imparts strength to the community for it cements individual's relationship with the collectivity and extreme socialization often leads to absolute surrender of the individual will to that of the collectivity. Under such a situation, the collectivity often comes into conflict with the despotic political authority as the latter depends upon the coercion of the voluntary will of the individual by violent means. Moreover, viewing the development of Sikhism from within the cultural matrix, it may be pointed out that it started as a revolt against the existing order which placed many constraints on the individual will.<sup>3</sup>

3. Joacohim Wach believes that the Hindu society presented an extremely complex social structure characterized not only by the sternness of its hierarchy but also by the tenacious conservatism and traditionalism of all the strata of society. See: Sociology of Religion, 11th edn. (1944 rpt. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1967), p. 270.

Guided by his own creative religious experience, Guru Nanak thought and formulated the principles to which his followers were to be oriented. His attitude towards society and state was certainly not of indifference or withdrawal from public life and all its affairs. He did not disapprove resistance by bearing of arms. He firmly believed that the then socio-political order was the embodiment of evil. It was born out of the contemporary milieu, having two distinct aspects: one, rigid, complex and hierarchical Hindu order which gave no freedom of will and action to an individual; and two, political domination of the Muslims coerced any group struggling for independence of action at social and political level. It may be surmized that the adherents to the new faith desirous of independent will and action struggled to break away from the existing social order of the orthodox Hindus. To retain their unity against the hostile socio-political order, it was necessary to evolve the religious beliefs pattern for it is fundamental to any religion as it sustains people's world view, their life style and their order of existence; for without it

religious behaviour is deprived of rationality and motivation. Complex religious dogmas, inseparable from beliefs, deal with the nature of man and the society.

As regards Sikhism, one of the major supernatural types of beliefs is the impersonal supernatural power of God, which exists independently and functions automatically. There are, however, limitations of impersonalized concept of God as far as its social functions are concerned. Therefore, the Guru, a person, is endowed with supernatural power. Therefore, the principle of succession based on merit was followed by Guru Nanak and by his immediate successor. But heredity in the Indian cultural context is so powerful a factor that it gradually came to be accepted by some Sikhs as an important determinant for succession to the Guru's position. Hence from the fourth guru onward the guru's position was determined on the basis of both heredity and merit.

Guru Arjan Dev created another institution in the Granth with supernatural powers more than that of the Guru himself. A non-human symbol, free from heredity, the Granth helps man in achieving salvation, protecting his interests, guiding his life and that of the community.

Therefore, it became the nucleus around which all kinds of institutions and practices began to grow, and not around the person of the Guru. This is evident from the fact that there is no worship of the dead gurus because it is believed that having supernatural status, they after their death merged with the Supreme Being. Moreover, Sikhism defines the power of the supernatural, guides human behaviour, provides system of norms with moral values, and upholds and sanctifies those values. The concept of cosmology and degree of integration of its values depends on the coherence and stability of the cultural pattern and norms of the society.

The Sikh religious beliefs were patterned on universal values transcending kinship and caste relations with special emphasis on the social essence of existence and as a part of supernatural Being, but yearning to be merged with it. Soul being atman is total consciousness of man, guiding him in the world. In the social context, the culturally approved behaviour of an individual is **rewarded** and the disapproved behaviour is punished. In the Sikh society, human conduct is integrated with the ethical code, therefore, it is ethical conduct and not the occupational status which determines the status of the soul of an individual after death.



The Sikh religion as a social organization developed its patterns of beliefs, values and behaviour shared by the members of the community during the guruship of Arjan Dev whose keen perception of the historical situation and the urgent needs of the movement enabled him to create institutional framework. Sociologically it formed an autonomous body with an organized structure to direct and regulate the conduct of its members. It patterned the daily life of the Sikhs in terms of standardisation of practices and rituals. Guru Arjan Dev thus imparted uniqueness as well as identity to the cultural pattern known as the Sikh religion.

## GLOSSARY

In this study many terms and words from Persian, Sanskrit and Punjabi languages have been used. The most commonly used words are listed below:

adi: first, primal.

ahankar: pride, ego, self-centredness, I-am-ness.

Alahania: A section of the Adi Granth. The hymns are recited at the time of death of a Sikh in praise of God.

amavas: the last day of the dark fortnight of a lunar month in Indian calendar when the night is moonless.

amrit: nectar; drink of immortality; name given to sugar water solution used at the time of initiation.

amrit-sarovar: tank of nectar or immortality.

Anand: pleasure, delight, bliss; a bani composed by Guru Amar Das.

antim ardas: last prayer for the peace of a departed soul after the bhog of path of Sri Guru Granth Sahib.

apshugun: any inauspicious object or bad omen.

arati: a ceremony performed by the Hindus in adoration of the Supreme Being by waving burning lamps before the idols of their deities; the symbolic hymn 'arati' is sung by the Sikhs in the evening in praise of Supreme Being before the holy Granth.

ardasa or ardas: prayer, petition, supplication, request; Sikh mode of worship; an important Sikh prayer made at the conclusion of a service.

Arora: A mercantile caste of the Panjab.

Asa-di-var: A section of Adi Granth which is recited by the ragis in the gurdwaras in the early morning.

aswari: lit. conveyance, carriage, <sup>a</sup>planquin etc; especially a term used for the procession of Guru Granth Sahib.

augun: evil qualities.

bani or vani: (lit. speech, utterances) stands for the sacred utterances particularly those enshrined in the Adi Granth. It also implies inspired or revealed utterances by the gurus or the bhaktas and called gurbani.

baoli: an ablong well with steps leading down to the water.

bhaktas: devotees of God; exponents of bhakti; especially refers to those devotees of God whose compositions were incorporated in the Adi Granth.

bhana: God's will, God's order.

bhog: enjoyment, eating, feeding on; especially it implies enjoyment of householders' life in Sikhism.

bahita or bohitha: boat or ship; symbolically refers to bani to swim across the other side of the world (attainment of Sachkhand)

brahaman: the first and foremost caste in the caste hierarchy of the Hindu system.

chatsal: a school or a madrasa.

chaur or chaūri: a fly whisk made of tail of yak used in the service of a royal or holy person or scripture.

chauki: a police post; a place where guards are placed; also a team of ragis and rababis employed in the service of Harimandir Sahib (Golden Temple, Amritsar) and other gurdwaras.

chhabil: a stall set for water service to the visitors and passersby.

chobara: a room on the upper storey of the house.

dan: donation, charity.

darshan: sight, view, vision.

daswandh: Sikh term of tithe i.e. one tenth of the income of the faithful, for the Guru's funds fixed by Guru Arjan Dev.

deg: cauldron; sacred food of the Sikhs (krah prasad). Made of flour, sugar and ghee in equal proportion.

dharamsal or dharamsala: the Sikh place of worship or gurdwara; a place of religious assemblage; a rest house for pilgrims or travellers.

dohita: daughter's son, grand son.

Granth: A book, Volume, religious book; especially the Sikh scripture, the Adi Granth, the first scripture of the Sikhs, the primal Granth.

Granth Darbar: It implies court of the Guru; audience of the Guru; especially the central hall of Harimandir where the Adi Granth is opened daily for darshans (sight and guidance of the **audience**).

granthi: custodian of the Granth; the functionary incharge of a Gurdwara or the Sikh priest.

gurdwara: Guru's abode; a Sikh temple of worship.

gur-gaddi: the spiritual throne of the Sikh Gurus; also it refers to accession to the spiritual throne of Guru Nanak by his successors.

gurmukh: lit. a person with his face towards the guru; a piousman, truthfulman, a devout Sikh.

Gurpurab: A Sikh festival celebrated on the birth and death anniversaries of the Sikh Gurus.

Gur-sangat: Congregation of the Sikhs around the Guru, the Guru Granth Sahib.

Guru: (Master, Perceptor) is the highest of the titles or appellations in the Sikh tradition. In Gurbani quite often Guru may imply the Divine teacher, God. It is also applied to the ten Gurus beginning with Guru Nanak Dev, the holy Granth and the Khalsa or the Sangat.

gun or guna: virtues, or good qualities.

hatha-yoga: yoga of force, a variety of yoga requiring physical postures and process of extreme difficulty.

haumai: self-centredness, ahankar, feeling self individuation, I-am-ness.

hukam: God's will, God's command; order, authority (legal or executive) rule, law, decree etc.

hukamnama: letter from the guru to the masands or the local sangats; order of the Guru; a decree, an order.

Jalau: displaying of the precious articles and jewellery of the Golden Temple on important occasions.

jam: there are eight jams in a day and one jam consists of three hours.

Janam Sakhi: a traditional biography, especially of Guru Nanak.

jot: the flame of a candle or lamp; a light generally lighted before the idol; also vision, Divine life etc; especially it implies the burning of pure gheefeed lamp inside the central hall of Harimandir.

kabit: a verse form.

kacha: unbaked, unburnt; built of sun-dried bricks; also implies unbricked tank.

kafir: one denying God; an infidel; a denier of facts, a quarrelsome fellow.

kam: lust, fornication.

Kanra chauki: Last service of Kirtan by the ragis and rababis in the Harimandir Sahib and other important gurdwaras.

kar-bheta: seva or service in the form of financial aid to the guru for any project.

kar-seva: physical service in any form in guru's projects.

katha: commentary, narrative, preaching, exposition of religious text; to read or recite a scripture to preach.

kavita: poem or verse.

Khatri: a mercantile caste particularly important in Panjab.

khir: sweet dish made of rice, milk and sugar.

kirtan: singing of the guru's hymns in praise of God with the accompaniment of musical instruments generally by a group of ragis.

Kotha sahib: A restroom built at the first floor of Akal Takhat where Guru Granth Sahib is put to sukhasan.

kothri: a small room; especially Guru Arjan's rest-room which was used as a place for the sukhasan (night rest) of the Adi Granth prior to the construction of Kotha sahib at Akal Takhat.

krodh: anger, wrath.

langar or Guru-ka-langar: public kitchen; a refractory; the free community kitchen attached to every gurdwara where food is served alike to all regardless of castes or creeds etc.

lavan: four marriage hymns composed by Guru Ram Das; a marriage ceremony among the Sikhs by taking four circumambulations around the holy Granth one by one at the accompaniment of recitation of each lavan.

madrasa or madrasah: school or college of higher education.

mahal or mahall: position, dwelling, residence, mansion place; a district (pargana).

mahurat: auspicious time and date determined by the brahamans or astrologers on the basis of the planets for doing any important work or starting a business or fixing marriage date etc.

Majha: (lit. middle): the area of central Panjab, lying between the river Beas and Ravi.

mallecha: exceedingly dirty; especially a term used for the muslims in India by the orthodox Hindus.

manjis: small cots; centres of preaching; area of specified jurisdiction.

masand: a representative or agent of the Sikh Guru appointed by Guru Arjan Dev to receive daswandh from the Sikhs and exercise spiritual authority on behalf of the Sikh Gurus in a specified area of Sikh sangats.

masandia: deputy or agent of a masand.

masya: see amavas.

mela: fair or festival.

meli: pupils, companions or brother in faith.

mina: treacherous, mean, unworthy; a nickname given by the Sikh Guru to those who claimed guruship while they were unfit for the office; the descendants of Prithi Chand, the eldest brother of Guru Arjan Dev.

moh: covetousness; attachment towards worldly things.

mokh: liberation or salvation from the cycle of births and deaths.

nam (lit. Name): Bear various interpretation. Often it simply implies devotion to God, holy Name; this term is especially in use in the creeds which emphasis bhakti or devotion.

pahar: there are eight pahars in a day and thus one pahar consist of three hours. Day pahar starts from 6 A.M. and night pahar from 6 P.M.

palki: <sup>a</sup>palanquin.

palla-pakrana: lit. giving one end of the scarf of the bridegroom to the bride by her father.

parkarma: the circumambulatory path around a holy place or site or an idol or deity; In Sikhism it implies circumambulation around the Sikh temple and the sarovar in clock-wise direction.

parkash: lit. glow or shine; especially implies opening of the holy Granth in the early hours of the morning in the Gurdwaras or at private places.

Parkash Divas: The day on which the holy Granth was first time installed in Harimandir Sahib. This day has become an important Gurburab of the Sikhs.

path: to read or study a lesson; reading the holy Granth as an act of devotion or any bani of the Granth Sahib by heart.

pauri: stanza; staircase or steps.

pothi: book, volume, sacred Granth.

pucca: solid, complete, mature; built of baked bricks.

pushaka: robes of holy Granth.

qashqa: tilak or teeka which is applied on the forehead with saffron and is considered propitious in Hindu terminology.

ragis: musicians, a singer of raga; a musician employed to sing guru's hymns in the praise of The Lord in the Sikh gurdwaras or private place.

Rahiras: Early evening prayer of the Sikhs at the time of sun set.

sabad (sabada): word. In Sikh usage a hymn of the holy Granth.

Sachkhand: This is the Realm of Truth; last and the fifth stage in the spiritual advancement of a devotee in which he abides in Supreme bliss and remains in communion with God and is liberated from the cycle of births and deaths.

sangat: assembly, religious congregation.

sangatia: missionary preachers appointed by Guru Amar Das in designated areas of Sikh sangats called manjis.

sarovar: a tank.

seva: dedicated community service, service of mankind; service.

shagun: It refers to good omen determined on the basis of position of planets by a astrologer or a brahman for starting a work or going on some expedition etc. by the Hindus.



Shia: A follower of smaller of the two principal sects within Islam that adheres to Ali. The principal point of cleavage between the Shias and Sunnis is that the former claim that Ali is the rightful successor of Muhhamad but his right was usurped by the first three caliphs.

shudra: the fourth and the lowest caste in the Brahamnical division of society.

shukrana: gratitude, thanks giving; a fee paid by plaintiff or defendant on the cause being decided in favour.

singhasan: takhat or throne.

Sodar or Sodar Rahiras: A name of a bani in Adi Granth which is recited in the early evening.

Sohila: A section of hymns from the Adi Granth recited before retiring to bed at night, and also at funerals.

sukhasan or sukhasana: a comfortable seat; the place of rest; a ceremony, connected with the retirement (closing) of Guru Granth Sahib for retiring for the night.

Sunni: A follower of the larger of the two sects of Islam, the conservative sect of Islam.

swayyas or swayyae: a poetic form.

tabe: a person sitting in the service of Guru Granth Sahib.

teeka or tilak: a coloured mark on the forehead; saffron mark applied on the forehead of the succeeding Gurus at the time of their succession to the gaddi.

udasis: long tours, travels or journey.

vahi: scroll, register.

vak: the holy word; to read out one complete hymn from the Sikh scripture first time at the opening of the Granth at random or before commencement or close of any religious ceremony.

var: a heroic Ode of several stanzas, a ballad; a song of praise.

varna: division of Hindu society on the basis of occupations or birth.

vingun: virtueless, absence of guna.

APPENDIX I

THE TWENTY-TWO MANJIS ESTABLISHED BY  
GURU AMAR DAS

1. Bhai Sachin-Sach, village Mandar, Tehsil Sharakpur, Lahore, Manji for Ambala area.
2. Bhai Allah-yar, a Pathan horse-merchant.
3. Bhai Sadharan of Goindwal (? Bakala), (Manji) for part of Ambala area.
4. Bhai Sawan Mall of Goindwal, a nephew of Guru Amar Das, Manji for Haripur and Kangra area.
5. Bhai Sukhan of Dhamial, district Rawalpindi, Manji for Pothohar.
6. Bhai Handal (Niranjan) of Jandiala, district Amritsar, Manji for his home area.
7. Bhai Kidara of Batala, district Gurdaspur.
8. Bhai Kheda of Khem Karan, district Amritsar, Manji for Khem Karan.
9. Bhai Gangu Shah of Garh-Shankar, district Hoshiarpur, Manji for Sirmaur and Nahan areas with headquarters at Daso in Kharar Tehsil.
10. Bhai Darbari of Majitha, district Amritsar.
11. Bhai Paro of village Dalla, Manji for Sindh, sea-side area.
12. Bhai Phera of Mirpur, Jammu, Manji for Mirpur Jammu and Hill area.
13. Bhai Eua of Sri Hargobindpur.
14. Bhai Beni of Chunian, district Lahore.
15. Bhai Mahesha of Sultanpur, Manji for (part of) Malwa area.
16. Bhai Mai Das of Naroli, Manji for Majha.
17. Bhai Manak Chand 'Marjiwra' of Vairowal, Manji for Vairowal area.
18. Bhai Matho Murari of village Khai, district Lahore, Manji for Chunian, district Lahore.

19. Bhai Raja Ram of village Sandh , in district Jullundur.
20. Bhai Ranga Shah of Mallu-pote, in district Jullundur.
21. Bhai Rang Das of village Gharuan, district Ropar.
22. Bhai Lalo of village Dalla.

The above list of twenty-two manjjs given by Dr. Ganda Singh in Panjab Past & Present, Vol. XIII-II, Serial No. 26, 1979, is based upon the details given by Giani Sohan Singh, Granthi of Sri Darbar Sahib, Amritsar, in the Gurdwara Gazettee, of the Shiromani Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee, for May, 1979, pp. 73-80, agrees with those given by Bhai Kahan Singh in his Gur-Sabad Ratnakar Mahankosh, pp. 2533-34, and Dr. Sahib Singh in Jeevan Virtant Sri Guru Amar Das Ji, Singh Brothers, Amritsar, pp. 33-40.

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